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LINES FOR AN ALBUM.

BY GEORGE D. PRENTICE.

Lady, though thou art far away,
  And though mine eyes have seen thee not,
I'll sing for thee a simple lay,
  And my sweet theme shall be—ah what?
Forgive me if my song shall be
Of thee, oh fair unknown, of thee.

I've sat beneath this twilight sky
  And mused upon thy gentle name,
Till Fancy from her home on high
  Is coming on her wings of flame,
To bid thy lovely form arise
Like life before my dreaming eyes.

Methinks, sweet girl, I see thee now,
  Thy blue eye glowing like a gem,
And thy fair hair upon thy brow,
  Young nature's golden diadem;
Ay, thou seem'st standing by my side,
The sunny-haired and azure-eyed.

My pathway lies mid storm and strife,
  And we on earth may never meet,
Still, mid the darkest ills of life,
  My thoughts will keep thine image sweet,
That Fancy with her witching art
Has deeply pictured on my heart.

And if perchance in future years
  Thine eyes upon this tribute look,
Undimmed by grief, unwet with tears,
  Oh give one thought of him who took
For thee his lyre—with chords unstrung—
From off the willow where it hung.

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THE BRIDE OF AN EVENING.

A ROMANCE OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK.

BY EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "THE ISLAND PRINCESS;" "THE DESERTED WIFE;" &c., &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PENITENT.

Oh, Father, bear with me; my heart
  Is sick and death-like, and my brain
  Seems girdled with a fiery chain,
Whose scorching links will never part,
  And never cool again.
Bear with me while I speak, but turn
  Away that gentle eye the while;
The fires of guilt more fiercely burn
  Beneath its holy smile. WHITTIER.

We must go back for a few hours, to relate the circumstances that led to the change in the governor's intentions, and to the consequent act of clemency which had given Godfrey Dulanie again to life.

On the evening of the day preceding, good Father Maraudey occupied the confessional of St. Andrew's, at Crossland. The shades of evening were gathering fast; the dim church was faintly lighted by the two wax tapers that burned before the great altar, and fell here and there upon the carved image of angel, saint or martyr that filled the niches near; the good priest, hopeless of another penitent that night, was about to rise and leave the church, when the sound of a hasty and faltering footstep near caused him to pause and resume his seat.

And the next moment the curtain was put aside, and a man entered, and dropped rather than kneeled at the feet of the confessor. At first he did not speak, but the sound of his laboring lungs and palpitating heart was audible through the stillness of the church. He panted like a hunted beast at bay, or a fugitive fallen exhausted from a flight for life. His face was blanched to a chalky whiteness, and sharpened till each feature gleamed out with piercing distinctness; his brows were knit, *writhen* together; the corners of his mouth drawn down, and his white lips apart and stiff as by extreme agony; great drops of sweat stood upon his corrugated brow; his hands were wrung together, until the finger joints shone out like horns; his whole form shuddered, cowered, groveled at the feet of the priest.

"Have mercy on me, Father, for I have awfully sinned," he gasped, in an almost unintelligible voice.

"God's mercy be upon thee, my son; all sin is awful," replied the priest, in an agitated voice; for, much as he had been accustomed to hearing the secret crimes and sorrows of others, the manner of this man deeply alarmed and troubled him.

"Pity me, Father, for my sin is past pardon," prayed the penitent, wringing his pale hands.

"I pity thee from my soul, my son; but there is no sin beyond the grace of God!"

"Except *my* sin! Oh, Father, except *my* sin!"

"My son, *despair* is one of the greatest sins. God is merciful; unburthen your bosom to his minister; repent, and be absolved."

"Oh, God! my God!" groaned the man, in the last degree of anguish.

"Nay, my son, the more grievous it may be to thee to confess thy sin, the more merit shalt thou have in doing this duty. Unbosom thyself to thy spiritual Father," said the priest, encouragingly.

"I came here for that purpose, and yet I cannot! Oh, God, I cannot! Father, your blood would curdle at the tale! My sin is one of the deepest dye!"

"'Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow! Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool!'" said the priest gently.

"And mine," broke forth the wretched man, in an agony of remorse, "mine are red like crimson, for my hand is crimsoned—is crimsoned with the crime for which another must suffer in the morning!"

"Oh, my son! my unhappy son! what is that which you tell me?" exclaimed the priest, in horror.

THE VICTIM ENTRAPPED.

"I tell you that which God and Satan and I and *you* now know to be true! My hand, and my hand only, is red with the blood of him for whose murder Godfrey Dulanie must innocently suffer to-morrow!"

"My son! my son, you are mad!"

"Would to Heaven I were!"

There fell a sudden silence of awe between them, which was broken at last by the troubled voice of the priest.

"My son, can it be that you are sane, and that you speak the truth?"

"I speak the truth! God knoweth whether I am sane, or if so, how long I may continue sane. *I did the deed!*"

"Oh, my son! my son! what tempted thee to this crime?"

"Avarice tempted me! Avarice *crazed* me! The old man was aged and miserly! His life and his hoarded gold were alike useless to all! I slew him for his gold! Remorse soon seized upon my vitals, but I soothed the gnawing pain by repeating to myself that the victim was old and wicked, and his taking off hurt no one—not even himself. But now a young man, full of life, vigor and hope, blessed with love and wealth, and well-earned fame, is dishonored, and about to die for my deed! Thus crime grows out of crime, and the weight of sin is pressing my soul down to perdition! Oh, Father! for the love of Christ, tell me what shall I do!"

The priest did not immediately answer, but bowed his head, and reflected for a few moments, then looking up he inquired solemnly—

"Do you demand my counsel in full sincerity of purpose to follow it?"

"I do."

"My son, that which I counsel you to do is the only one right thing to do. It is painful, grievous, intolerable, I know, but it is the sole course left to you. My son, you should go instantly to the town, confess your sin, clear the innocent, and give yourself up to the authorities. It is a terrible trial. I know, but it is the only restitution you can make, and God will give you strength to make it."

Nothing but deep groans from the wretched man answered this. The priest prayed in silence for his penitent.

"Father!" at length cried the man, "I repent in sorrow and bitterness of spirit! Father, will you not absolve me of my sin?"

"Son, I can absolve thee only on the conditions I have named."

"And they, Father, are——"

"That you shall go and deliver yourself up, and save the innocent from unmerited punishment."

"But, my God! in that case I should have to die! And I cannot die, Father! I am not fit to die! I am not old, like Hugh Hawe was, nor prepared for death, as Godfrey Dulanie is! Father! I dare not die! I cannot give myself up!" exclaimed the unhappy man.

"Then the church cannot give you absolution!" solemnly replied the priest.

"But I repent! I *repent!* I REPENT!" wailed the wretch, wringing his hands, and groveling upon the floor at the feet of his confessor.

"There can be no true repentance, my son, where there exists the power without the will of making restitution."

"But I have the will! I *have* the will! I HAVE the will!" vehemently exclaimed the penitent; "I have the will, but not the power! I would gladly save Dulanie; but I cannot do so without sacrificing myself, and I am not prepared to die, my Father!"

"Then, miserable man, if you do not intend to make restitution, as far as in you lies, will you tell me why you present yourself before me to-night?"

"Why?" cried the sufferer; "why does the overburthened breast seek relief?—why do the drowning catch at straws?—why, in the deepest despair, do we still hope? I came to confide to you, under the sacred seal of confession, the secret sin of my soul! I came in the fond, mad hope—the hope born of despair—the hope that you, in your superior wisdom and goodness, might devise a plan by which I could save him without sacrificing myself. I came in the hope that the bitter, bitter remorse that I suffer—the remorse that chases sleep from my bed, and appetite from my board—might win you to absolve me of my grievous sin! Oh, Father! I repent! I *repent!* I REPENT! Absolve me of my heavy sin!"

"Alas! my son, the church has no absolution for those who refuse to make restitution. Let me persuade you to do that great act of justice, and experience the church's mercy!"

"Oh, I cannot, Father! I cannot! I dare not meet the consequences!"

"Then I dare not give thee absolution! Reflect, my son, that if, before to-morrow, you have not denounced yourself to the authorities, Godfrey Dulanie will have perished on the scaffold for *your* crime, and you will have taken upon your own soul the burthen of an insupportable sin."

"Father, you cannot give me absolution except I give myself up?"

"No."

"And this is your ultimatum, Father?"

"This is my ultimatum."

"God help me, then!" cried the penitent, starting to his feet, and rushing from the confessional.

In a moment he was back again, asking hurriedly—

"Father, you recognized me?"

"I recognized thee, my son," replied the priest.

"And you know who I am?"

"I well know who you are."

"Father!" exclaimed the man, in alarm, "you have refused me absolution, unless I make a public acknowledgment of my crime, and give myself up to die in the stead of the innocent condemned man; how know I but that you may go still farther, and denounce me to the authorities?"

"Your story, my son, was confided to me under the seal of confession—the sacred seal that may never be broken!"

"And my secret is safe with you?"

"As safe as with the dead!"

"Even though Godfrey Dulanie should innocently perish to-morrow, for the lack of the secret being divulged?"

"Even so! Even to save an innocent man from dying the death of the guilty, I may not break a solemn oath! But, my son, I charge *you*, as you value your soul's immortal weal, yourself to give that secret to the winds!"

"It is enough, Father! I go!"

"To divulge thy crime and clear the innocent, I hope, my son!"

"No, alas! to wrestle with remorse, despair, anguish!" cried the miserable man, starting up and hurrying from the scene.

The priest remained almost transfixed with horror and amazement, at the tale that he had heard. His own position in the affair was one of the most painful that could be imagined. Knowing that Godfrey Dulanie was perfectly innocent of the crime for which he was to die on the morrow; knowing the guilty party in whose stead he was to perish; but having this knowledge only under the sacred seal of confession, and being bound by his official oath, under heaviest penalties, never, under any circumstances or in any extremity, to divulge any secret so confided. In truth, this was a most distressing position to the good priest.

Instead of leaving the church, as he had intended to do, he remained sitting in the confessional, alternately praying and meditating as to what he could possibly do to save the innocent without breaking the seal of the confessional. At last he thought of a plan, dangerous but promising. What was intended needed to be quickly done, for it was now eight o'clock in the evening, and unless the execution were stayed before the noon of the next day, the guiltless must die for the guilty!

Rising and clapping his little square hat on his head, the good priest hurried, as fast as his heavy weight would permit, from the church.

That night Governor Sterne was seated at the supper table, at Piedmont, in company with Colonel Shannon and the ladies of the family. To say that the "forthcoming event" did not cast its "shadow before" and over them would not be true. Yet each and all endeavored to rally their spirits, ignore the approaching tragedy, and keep up the thread of an animated conversation. In the midst of this scene the door opened, and a servant entered, bearing a card, which, with a bow, he presented to Governor Sterne. The pasteboard bore the name of

"Pierre Maraudey," and the words—

"Entreats an immediate interview with his excellency, on a matter of life and death."

"Madam and young ladies, will you have the goodness to excuse me?" suavely inquired Governor Sterne, as he arose.

"Assuredly, sir," was the affable reply.

And with a bow the governor left the table and the dining-room, and passed into the parlor, where Father Maraudey awaited him.

The stout priest arose and bowed, but the governor clasped his hand in a cordial shake, motioned him to resume his seat, took a chair beside him, and inquired in what manner he could be so happy as to serve Father Maraudey.

"I come, your excellency, upon a matter of life and death," said the priest, solemnly.

"So your note informed me. May I inquire what that matter of life and death may be?"

"Sir, it concerns Mr. Godfrey Dulanie, now under sentence of death in the county jail, and ordered for execution to-morrow."

The governor suddenly grew very grave, and remained silent, with his chin dropped upon his chest, his right hand buried in his bosom, and his legs crossed, in an attitude of deep thought.

"Sir," continued the priest, "I come in the strong hope of obtaining from your excellency a reprieve for that unhappy young man."

"Mr. Maraudey, I regret very much that it does not lie within my prerogative to grant your request. The pardoning, commuting, and respiting power entrusted to the executive, is only to be exercised under certain conditions, which certainly do not attend the present case. I have before explained this to the friends of Mr. Dulanie, who have come to me in his behalf," said the governor, with suave courtesy

"But, sir," said the priest, "are not one of the conditions of pardon an ascertained error in the verdict of the jury, as, for instance, when the verdict of 'guilty' has been pronounced upon a man afterwards discovered to be innocent?"

"Assuredly; that is one of the most urgent reasons for the interference of the executive."

"Then, sir, that reason exists in the case of Mr. Dulanie!"

The governor shrugged his shoulders and raised his eyebrows without farther reply.

"Mr. Dulanie, sir, is really innocent of the crime for which he has been condemned."

"Assuredly," sneered the governor, "he is innocent by the verdict of his friends, but, unfortunately, by that of the jury he is guilty."

"Sir, Godfrey Dulanie is *not* guilty!" said the priest, with deep solemnity.

"Of course not, by his own account. Now it is a remarkable and lamentable fact, that among all the criminals that are annually condemned and hanged, there is never to be found a guilty man! They are all a set of the most deeply injured innocents to be found on earth."

"Sir, sir, this sarcasm sits not well upon the lips of your excellency!" said the priest, in bitter sorrow.

"Reverend sir, I am aware that it does not; and therefore I will answer you with due gravity—that I am sorry not to be able to receive either Mr. Dulanie's word, or your opinion, in proof of his innocence."

"Sir, I offer you no mere opinions! I do not only believe, but *know* Godfrey Dulanie to be guiltless of the murder of Hugh Hawe!" said the priest, with a profound earnestness of manner, look and tone that carried strong conviction with it.

The governor stared.

"You *know* it?" he asked.

"I KNOW it," responded the priest, with deep solemnity.

The governor half arose from his chair and gazed with astonishment upon the speaker.

"*How* do you know this, may I inquire?" he then asked.

"By knowing who the real murderer is!"

"WHAT! Take care, Mr. Maraudey! Be cautious, I pray you, how you implicate another in the crime that has been abundantly proved upon Godfrey Dulanie. What evidence, I ask you, sir, can you offer to support your statement?"

"I have the best possible evidence, the testimony of the conscience-stricken man who really did the murder!"

"Sir! sir! remember what you are saying!" exclaimed the governor, beginning to be strongly excited.

"I *do* remember, your excellency! 'I am not mad, most noble Festus! but speak the words of truth and soberness.' I know what I am saying, Governor Sterne!"

"And you say that Godfrey Dulanie is guiltless of the crime for which he is about to-morrow to suffer, and that you know the real murderer upon the evidence of his own statement?"

"I do most distinctly."

"Then, sir, in heaven's name, who is the murderer?"

"Governor Sterne, I am not at liberty to tell you!"

"*How*, sir! Not at liberty to divulge the name of a criminal?"

"No, your excellency!"

"And *why*, I beseech you?"

"Because, sir, the secret was confided to me by the conscience-stricken criminal, under the sacred seal of confession—a seal that my priestly oath forbids me under any circumstances, or in any emergency, to violate!" said the father, solemnly.

"What! not even to bring a guilty man to justice, nor yet to save the innocent from unmerited punishment?"

"Not even for that, your excellency; not even to save my own life from death could I break my clerical oath and violate the sacred seal of confession!"

"But, allow me to instruct you, sir, that the law recognizes no such oaths; you are legally bound to deliver up the murderer, since he is known to you!"

The good priest bowed, but made no reply.

"Was, or is, the criminal a native of this county?" asked the governor.

"I must not answer your excellency's question," replied Maraudey.

"Was he a negro or a white man?"

"Pardon me, sir; for I cannot satisfy you."

"What, then, was the motive of his crime?"

"Your excellency will please to understand that I am not at liberty to answer any question that may point to the identity of the criminal, as that would involve a violation of the seals of confession."

"Am I to understand, sir, that while admitting that you know the real murderer of Hugh Hawe, you refuse to divulge his identity?"

"I do, sir!"

"Then it becomes my duty to arrest you, reverend sir," said the governor, rising and touching the bell.

A servant entered to answer the summons.

"Go and request your master to come hither!" said the governor.

The man bowed and withdrew for a few minutes, at the end of which he returned and ushered into the parlor, Colonel Shannon.

The old soldier bowed to and shook hands with the priest, and then turned upon the governor a look of inquiry, as who should say—

"Well, what am I to do for you?"

Answering that look, Governor Sterne turned, and gravely addressing his host, said—

"You are one of the Justices of the Peace for this county, I believe, sir?"

"I have that honor," replied the colonel, much wondering at the question.

"Then I here charge Pierre Maraudey, parish priest of St. Andrew's, as an accessory after the fact to the murder of Hugh Hawe, and also as being guilty of a compounding of felony, in wilfully concealing the name of a principal in the crime. And I request, Mr. Magistrate, that he be arrested and examined upon this charge," said Governor Sterne, resuming his seat, while the astounded Colonel Shannon strove to collect his scattered faculties. As soon as he found the use of his tongue he began to express his astonishment, and to ask questions in a very informal manner.

"If, sir, you will swear me as a witness, I prefer to make my statement on oath," said the governor.

Colonel Shannon bowed, took his seat at the table, formed his little impromptu court, administered the oath, and took the statement of Governor Sterne. Then he examined Father Maraudey, who frankly told him all that had been related to the governor; but refused to give any more particular information. Whereupon an officer was summoned, a warrant made out, and Father Maraudey committed to the County Jail.

As he was leaving the house he turned and said—

"Your excellency will at least grant a respite to the prisoner under sentence of death?"

"I cannot answer or satisfy you upon that point," replied the governor, with a sardonic smile, as he paid back to the priest his own words.

Father Maraudey bowed and followed the officer who had him in charge.

But Governor Sterne, with all his faults of character, was not the man to hang another whom he had any reason to believe guiltless.

He immediately sat down to the magistrate's table, rapidly wrote out a document, and rising, said—

"It is now ten o'clock! Where can I get a messenger who can cross the mountains and ride to W. to be in time to save that man?"

"Dr. Heine has just arrived on his fast horse Hassan. He would kill his horse, I know, to save the fellow!" replied the colonel.

And accordingly Dr. Heine was summoned, and gladly undertook the delivery of the respite, which he accordingly and punctually accomplished to general satisfaction.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE HOUSE OF THE CURSE.

And over all these hung a baleful gloom,
The step stole fearful thro' each shadowy room.
Dark, sumptuous, solemn as some eastern pile,
Where mutes keep watch—a home without a smile.
Noiseless, as silence reigned there like a law
Till the cold luxury saddened into awe. BULWER.

Leaving stout Father Maraudy in the clutches of the law, and leaving the unfortunate Godfrey Dulanie and his faithful wife in the prison cell to which he had been remanded, it is now necessary to the elucidation of our story that we should visit another habitation, which, though more cheerful in its superficial aspect, was scarcely less gloomy in its interior spirit.

Farquier was a beautiful building of white free-stone, with piazzas running along the whole front, from basement to roof. Behind it arose a back ground of wooded mountains. Before it fell the valley, rolling in undulating hills down to the banks of the bright Rapahannock. Externally the whole scene was radiant with life and beauty.

Pass the threshold of the house and all was changed.

Within a luxurious chamber of that sumptuous dwelling, Alma Henry, the mistress of the mansion, lay slowly expiring. Thus she had lain many days, and thus she might lay many days longer, in a state that was neither life nor death.

From the night of the murder of old Hugh Hawe she had slowly failed. But so much of fitful gloom and eccentricity characterized her malady, that her friends did not scruple to ascribe her strange words to partial insanity.

Though still living beneath the same roof with her husband, she virtually separated herself from him. Though, as long as she was able to do so, she had scrupulously fulfilled her duties as the mistress of his household, yet she had avoided his society and conversation.

From the time of the arrest of Godfrey Dulanie for the murder of Hugh Hawe, her malady had greatly increased. She had watched the trial with intense and fearful interest. When, at length, she had heard of his conviction and sentence, she had sunk back fainting upon the bed, from which she was destined never more to rise.

And from this time her husband durst not even cross the threshold of her chamber, for at the sight of his face she invariably fell into violent convulsions, that threatened speedily to terminate her life. This seemed the more extraordinary as Dr. Henry had always enjoyed the reputation of being a constant and devoted husband, and Mrs. Henry had also the character of a fond and faithful wife. And no one could solve the mystery of this new and strange antagonism, or ascribe its existence to any other cause than partial insanity on the part of Alma.

Her husband was constrained to forsake her apartment, where nothing but distress greeted his appearance. Her friends felt compelled to abandon a house so full of gloom and terror, where all evil influences seemed to congregate.

Only Agnes Darke, the gentle young nurse, remained faithful to the suffering lady.

Since Dr. Henry had been obliged to absent himself from her sight, his place as her physician had been filled by Ernest Heine, whose wise and gentle ministrations, conjoined to those of Agnes Darke, would have soothed and restored the unhappy lady, could any human power have saved her.

But if the young physician, with his utmost skill and attention, did not succeed in doing more than alleviating his patient's sufferings, he did not fail to observe and admire the disinterested devotion of the sweet young girl who, regardless of fatigue, day and night devoted herself, with saint-like patience, to the soothing of the sufferer. Day by day the beauty of her soul, no less than the loveliness of her face and form, more and more deeply impressed his imagination and his heart. But he felt that the house of mourning was for every reason an improper place for his wooing, and thus it was that the love which had taken so deep root in his heart remained unspoken, though not unrevealed; for it found a certain and intelligible expression in the softer glances of his eyes, and the deeper tones of his voice, and the gentler deference in his manner, in addressing her.

And Agnes *knew* that she was beloved, and *felt* that she also loved; and yet so well she guarded her own eyes, and tones, and manner, that no sign of this reciprocity of feeling escaped her. And whether her conduct was governed by maiden modesty, or morbid self-respect, is not known; but it is certain that Dr. Heine was left in doubt as to the feelings of his lady-love.

Ernest Heine had known Agnes Darke long enough, and studied her character and disposition closely enough, to feel sure that she was all his heart could desire, or his reason approve, in a wife, and he felt that he esteemed and loved her beyond all living women; yet, having resolved to delay his wooing to some more appropriate time and place, he confined himself to such deferential attentions as a gentleman might anywhere pay a lady.

But our strong resolutions often give way to impulse, or yield to circumstances.

One morning, the young physician, standing by the bedside of his patient, heard her murmur to herself—

"What will become of Agnes when I am gone?"

"Aye, what indeed!" thought the doctor—"for after the death of her patroness the world will not permit her to remain beneath the roof of a young widower, without any lady at the head of his house! What, then, will become of the orphan girl? Who will receive her? Whither can she go? Ah! this question pressing upon my heart changes my whole duty. I must have an explanation with her at once, so that when she withdraws from this roof, she will go forth, as my wife, to a home of her own."

With these generous thoughts and purposes occupying his mind and heart, he left the chamber of his patient, and went down into the lower hall.

Providence seemed to favor his wishes. Contrary to her usual practice, Agnes Darke had left the sick-room, and was now standing at the parlor door, seemingly awaiting the doctor, for as he appeared she beckoned him into the parlor, and begged him to satisfy her as to the present condition and future prospects of his patient.

Ernest Heine replied with simple and straightforward candor, giving but little hope of her restoration to health. On receiving her answer, Agnes bowed gravely, and was about to withdraw from the room, when the lover respectfully intercepted her by saying—

"Miss Darke, will you allow me the favor of a very few moments' conversation with you?"

Agnes gravely nodded assent, and seated herself in the chair that he placed for her accommodation.

Ernest Heine then placed himself beside and a little behind her, so that he need not embarrass her by too direct a front view; and, resting his hand on the back of her chair, he stooped, and after a little embarrassment and hesitation, began:

"Agnes, you and I have known each other for nearly three years. What I think of you need not be spoken, as it is about to be proved. And I hope that you, Agnes, regard me as an honest and thriving man, who is both willing and able to take care of the woman who may bless him with her hand." The doctor paused.

Agnes neither looked up nor spoke, but remained with her chin dropped upon her breast, and her hands crossed upon her lap.

"The meaning of all this is, Agnes, that I love you. Will you be my wife?" whispered Ernest, stooping closer to her ear.

Still Agnes neither spoke nor moved, except to close her eyes to catch the tears which else would have rolled down her cheeks; but which now hung, two glistening drops of dew, on the dark fringes of her eyelashes.

"Dear Agnes, you do not answer me. Well, love, I will not distress you. Only let me take your hand, and I will understand that I am to be blessed with your acceptance of my love." And suiting the action to the word, he clasped her fingers, and would have raised them to his lips; but she gently withdrew her hand, and in a voice so low that he had to stoop quite low to hear her, she answered:

"Dr. Heine, I thank you sincerely for the honor you have done me; but I beg that you will withdraw your proposal, and forget that it ever was made."

Deeply distressed by this rejection, yet impressed by the exquisite delicacy with which it was worded, Dr. Heine remained for a few minutes silently regarding her. Then in faltering tones he asked—

"Agnes, will you permit me to inquire *why* you have given me this answer?"

"Yes. 'Pity,' they say, 'is akin to love.' You have seen me here, and compassionated my orphaned condition, and you call that *love* which is truly *mercy*," was the gentle reply.

"Agnes! listen to me. The Lord knoweth that my love never sprang from so disparaging a sentiment as pity! It was born of admiration rather. Dear Agnes, is this the only reason why you reject me?"

"No, I have others. You do not know whom you honor with your preference, Dr. Heine."

"I do!—a fair, good girl! a sweet and noble woman!"

"A poor maiden rather, who is not only quite penniless, but is also of very humble birth. My mother, Dr. Heine, was a seamstress, who used to sew for old Mr. Hawe, and who dying left her child in deep destitution. Mr. Hawe, who was much better than ever was believed of him, took the friendless child, and placed her at school, and afterwards received her into his home, and *would have provided for her future had he been spared to do so*. You, Ernest Heine, are of an old and aristocratic family, who might never consent to receive the insignificant girl whom you favor with your affection."

"Agnes—what is all this to me or to you? I am not a boy to be guided by the opinions or biassed by the prejudices of others. I am a man near thirty years of age, capable, one would suppose, of judging for myself. I love you Agnes. I begin to think, also, that I am not indifferent to you. With your consent I wish to make you my wife. Come, if you have no more serious objections than those you have specified, I will still hope soon to claim this dear hand as mine!" he said, again clasping her fingers, and carrying them to his lips.

Agnes withdrew them, and pressed both hands to her face, to keep back the tears that were swelling to her eyes, as she answered—

"But I *have* other objections, sir! Doctor Heine, you are rising to distinction in your profession. If you should unite your fate with one so poor and obscure as myself, you would seriously compromise your interests. Whereas if you should marry a lady of your own station, you would greatly enhance your fortunes. Believe me, I am worldly-wise enough to understand that!"

"Worldly wisdom has come too soon to you. You do not know how to apply it. Agnes, I want no wife to help forward my fortunes. I think I can push forward alone, and conquer a standing-place for both myself and my wife—my wife who can be no other woman than yourself! Come, my love—come Agnes—give me a frank reply! Tell me that you will be mine!"

"Ernest Heine, I cannot. Do not urge me, please. The most I can do for you is, to say that if, at the end of a year, and after mature deliberation, you should feel disposed to renew this proposal, why *then* I may give you a different answer."

"Will you? will you, my love? Then hear me pledge myself——"

"No, no—you must not pledge yourself to anything. You must remain absolutely free, to change your mind if it should so please you before the year of probation is out. That is the only possible way of testing and proving for yourself the reality and durability of your present feelings. Forgive my frankness."

"Oh! Agnes, Agnes, but this is a very hard condition!"

"It is a very necessary one. But I have left my patient too long already. I must away to her. Good day, Doctor Ernest."

And swiftly and silently, as a light withdrawn, Agnes vanished from the room.

It was a few days after this, that the news of the respite of Godfrey Dulanie reached Farquier, and was conveyed to Alma Henry. The poor sufferer smiled with delight on hearing the glad tidings, and for a few days she rallied. But her health was too far gone to admit hope of her ultimate recovery.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE HUNTED MAIDEN.

She stands as stands the stricken deer,
Checked midway in the fearful chase;
When bursts upon her eye and ear,
The gaunt gray robber, baying near,
Between her and her hiding-place;
While still behind, with yell and blow,
Sweeps like a storm, the coming foe.
WHITTIER.

If this true-hearted lover appeared, sent from Heaven for the future stay and support of her helpless orphanage, Agnes had another suitor that seemed as surely sent from hades for her torment and destruction.

For months past Agnes had seen with shuddering fear, that whenever she chanced to be left alone with Docter Henry, he would invariably fix his eyes upon her with a sinister and dangerous meaning.

Without seeming to notice these insulting glances, Agnes would quietly withdraw from his presence, and confining herself to the sick room of her friend, she would keep as much as possible from his society.

But great is the strength and perseverance of evil. In the lonely halls and passages he contrived to waylay and intercept the poor maiden, as she would pass to and from the upper to the lower rooms; he would join her, walk by her side, seize and press her hand, and drop insulting words of passion into her pure ears.

At such times she would break from him in terror and flee away, ashamed, shuddering and cowering, to the sanctuary of the sick room.

But evil is not so to be repulsed. All her fear and horror and abhorrence of his suit seemed but to add fuel to the fire of his passions. His pursuit grew more vigilant, artful and persecuting. It seemed impossible to avoid falling into the snares constantly and covertly laid for her destruction. She would have left the house, even though it had been to perish in the wilderness, had it not been for the poor invalid who was so dependent on her care. But she secluded herself still more rigidly in the sick chamber. She took her slender meals there; she slept there on a sofa bedstead. And if anything were wanted from below, she rang and made a servant bring it. Thus the poor fawn hoped to escape the hunter.

Alas how vainly!

She should at all cost, to herself and others, have fled from that house of sin, for fruitless were all other means to save herself from ruin!

One fatal day she fell into the snare set for her destruction. Doctor Henry—as all the household supposed—left home for a day's absence in the village.

It happened that about the middle of the afternoon, Agnes had occasion to go to the parlor cupboard to get a restorative cordial for her patient. Believing that her persecutor was miles away, she entered without fear or misgiving the silent and deserted room.

She had procured the article of which she had come in search, and she was about to leave the room, when the figure of Doctor Henry, entering by the only door, arrested her astonished sight.

While she stood gazing upon him in a sort of panic, he quietly closed and locked the door and withdrew the key, which he placed in his pocket, keeping his eye fixed upon his purposed victim all the while.

With her own gaze fixed upon the ground, Agnes advanced towards the fastened door, and placing her hand upon the nob of the latch, said in constrained tones:

"Let me pass, if you please, Doctor Henry."

He turned upon her a sarcastic gaze and answered:

"I thank you very much for *opening* a conversation with me, Miss Darke. It was an honor for which I should scarcely have dared to hope from you, judging from your late conduct to me."

"Doctor Henry," said the maiden, with great dignity, "I came hither to procure a cordial for your suffering wife. I beg you will let me return to her immediately."

"No, Agnes, not until you have heard me! for *I too* suffer, more ~~perchance than she does.~~ *I too* need your good offices, more I am sure than she does."

Agnes turned in loathing from him and walked towards the window.

He followed her and seized her hand and held it in a firm grasp while he said:

"Agnes! there is a silent warfare between us that must come to an end. You well know its nature. You have inspired me with a passion which you owe it to my peace to satisfy."

"Wretch! how dare you address such words to me! Unhand me, sir!" she exclaimed, breaking from him, and going to a bell-rope which she vigorously pulled.

He laughed aloud.

"Ring, beautiful Agnes! ring a peal of bells! wake all the mountain echoes, if you like! but not one servant will answer your summons! they are all sent from the house! only you and I and that comatose invalid in the other wing of the building remain in this house! You are in my power, fair Agnes! And now, at last, by all the fiends in hades, you shall hear me!" he said, re-possessing himself of her hand and forcing her to sit down on the sofa.

"There! fear no *farther* violence from me, Agnes! I only wish to compel you to *hear* me! I should scorn to constrain you further! a willing surrender or none at all for me! You must now listen to me; for it is an honest love and an honorable position that I would offer you!"

"Fiend! how dare you speak so! Think of the dying woman above stairs and for very shame be silent!" exclaimed Agnes, blushing with indignation.

"I do think of that dying woman. Agnes, she is no wife of mine. Twelve months' ago she repudiated me from her bosom. In a very few days she must pass from this earth, and I shall be free to wed again. Agnes! be now my love, and the first use I shall make of my freedom will be to make you my wife," he whispered, passing his arm around her waist and attempting to embrace her.

"Demon! a thousand deaths would I die rather! Oh! my very ears are accursed that they have heard your words!" exclaimed Agnes, breaking from him and standing at bay.

"Fear not, Agnes! I repeat that I shall use no *violence* towards you! You shall be a *willing* conquest, or none! You despise the passion you have kindled, the pain you have caused. But mark my words, young woman! before another week shall be over, you shall *sue* for the love that you now *reject*!"

"Wretch! what if I were to expose your villainy?" she exclaimed.

"No one would believe you, Agnes! that is all! You are sufficiently in my power! I delay my triumph only for some serener hour! In token whereof I suffer you to go! Pass out, fair Agnes!" And holding open the door, he permitted her to retire from the room.

A chill of superstitious dread, inspired by the calm, cold cruelty of his threats, crept over the maiden as she regained her friend's sick room. She administered the cordial to the patient, adjusted her pillows, arranged her coverlid, made her otherwise comfortable, and then sat down to reflect.

The scene that had just past between Doctor Henry and herself rendered it absolutely necessary that she should withdraw from the house.

Her mind was now made up and her plan arranged. She would write a note to her friend, Mrs. Willoughby, requesting the shelter of her hospitable roof for a few days, or until she could find another situation as nurse, housekeeper, or seamstress. She would have this note ready for Ernest Heine to convey to his sister.

She lost no time in carrying her plan into execution; and without hinting to her lover the reason why she wished to leave the house, she entrusted him with the letter to be delivered.

Then she wrote a second note addressed to Doctor Henry, and warning him to seek the services of another nurse for his wife, as *she* was about to leave the house. This note received no manner of reply.

But the next day when Doctor Heine arrived on his professional visit, he brought with him a letter from Mrs. Willoughby to Agnes Darke, cordially offering to her a home in the parsonage, for so long as she should see fit to favor its inmates with her presence. In addition to this, Doctor Heine informed Agnes that his horse and buggy were at her orders to convey her to the parsonage.

Agnes was constrained to accept his kindness; and that very afternoon she packed up her little wardrobe and prepared to leave the house of evil. She took a tender leave of her almost unconscious patient, pressing kisses on her cold brow, and charging her old nurse, Dinah, to watch and tend her carefully. Poor old Dinah, who was lost in amazement at this sudden flitting of Agnes, promised to do all that was required of her.

Agnes then went down into the hall where Ernest Heine awaited to conduct her to the buggy which was standing before the door.

Her lover lifted her in, carefully arranged her seat, drew the buffalo robe up over her lap and then went to see that her trunk was well secured behind.

During the few seconds that he was absent from her side, upon this errand, Doctor Henry came out of the house, up to the buggy, and stooping to Agnes's ear whispered, so that none but herself could hear:

"You think that you have eluded me, fair madam—we shall see!" And having said this, he bowed pleasantly to Ernest Heine, and retired into the piazza.

Agnes sank back in her seat, shuddering with a vague and terrible presentiment of some awful calamity at hand.

"Why—will you permit me to ask—have you left your friend, my dear Agnes?" inquired Ernest Heine, as he gathered up the reins and started his horse.

"Because," answered Agnes, evasively, "the trials of the situation were getting to be too heavy for me; I should have fallen ill on their hands."

"They were, indeed. I do not think that you have had a night's rest for many weeks past. I am glad that you have left."

Agnes made no direct reply; she was willing that he should remain in ignorance of the deep insult she had received and which was the true reason of her departure from the house. As she continued silent, her lover spoke again:

"You will feel less regret in leaving your friend, from the fact that she has been much more composed in mind since she heard of the reprieve of Mr. Dulanie."

"Yes," answered Agnes, "it is wonderful how deeply she has been affected by the whole of that tragedy from first to last. No one felt the murder of old Mr. Hawe so grievously as she did; and yet she was not nearly connected either by blood or friendship with the murdered or the murderer. How strange!"

"Passing strange! But, dear Agnes, why do you say the *murderer?* Since the revelation made to the governor by Father Maraudey many people believe Mr. Dulanie to be innocent."

"Oh! I would that they were right! I would that I, too, could believe that story! but, alas! sir, it can weigh nothing against the evidence of my own senses! You know what I, alas! saw with my own eyes and heard with my own ears!"

"But what then, Agnes, can you make of this story told by the priest?"

"I know not! It may possibly be that the penitent in question was a madman who only imagined what he told to the priest, or it may be that he was some devoted friend more jealous than scrupulous who took this way to save Mr. Dulanie. Has Father Maraudey yet given any clue to his identity?"

"No; he was brought up before the court yesterday, where, refusing to testify, he was committed for contempt. It is a matter of conscience with him, and it is really very doubtful whether there is any law to compel him, *in this case*—to do so."

"One thing I know," said Agnes, "that the priest would die in prison rather than break his oath."

"He is at least likely to remain in prison a long time," said Dr. Heine.

They were now beginning to descend the mountain; and the road was so difficult and dangerous that her lover was compelled to give his whole attention to his horses, and the conversation ceased. When they had safely reached the foot of the pass, a few yards of level road under the shadow of the ridge brought them to the parsonage.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

There is no relation in life so sacred, so endearing as this, and none in which the duties are so frequently mistaken. How seldom do we children repay all we owe to the parents who have fostered our days of helplessness! how seldom do we reflect on the magnitude of our obligations towards them! The old father or mother are shoved aside, while we shower our loving attentions on a stranger. We appear to fancy that, because we can be kind to them any day, their claims may be indefinitely postponed—they may "manage" while the alien is courted. Like our Maker, they, our earthly fathers, have the least portion of our time. And yet we would not willingly be ungrateful to Deity or parent—we own our vast debt to each, but in words only—we make no attempt to repay it; though they are not harsh creditors, and though so little would satisfy them.

Why is it so? Is it because use has deadened gratitude? We are so accustomed to accept parental sacrifices, that they become matters of course; we take them as habitually as our daily bread, and they excite as little emotion and thankfulness; yet if either were denied us, we should make the air resound with our clamorous complaints. Stop the supplies, and we discover how necessary they have been to our well-being and comfort. When deprived of a parent's cherishing presence and support, we find our irreparable loss; as when unable to enjoy the blessings of religius communion and thanksgiving, we first truly appreciate their inestimable value.

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A MAN may as well expect to grow stronger by always eating, as wiser by always reading. Too much overcharges nature, and turns more into disease than nourishment. It is thought and digestion which makes books serviceable, and gives health and vigor to the mind. Books well chosen neither dull the appetite nor strain the memory; but refresh the inclinations, strengthen the powers, and improve under experiments. By reading, a man, as it were, ante-dates his life, and makes himself contemporary with past ages.

GENTILITY STRUGGLES.

Nowadays everybody is striving to be considered "genteel." It is fashionable to sneer at honest labor, and prodigious efforts are made to keep "the family" from being "disgraced" by having a mechanic, or other honest worker, among its members. In consequence of this foolish prejudice, our professions are choked by the crowds entering them; lawyers and physicians are starving in feeless despair; an advertisement for a clerk creates a race of anxious applicants—but then their employments are "genteel."

What, however, becomes of the disappointed? Heaven only knows; they hope again—strive on to the last in tradeless penury—cut off from every enjoyment of life—from all that makes it dear. With the natural wishes and affections of man, they are doomed never to see them realized; theirs is an unvarying scene of self-restraint. Every refining influence is beyond their reach; every ennobling pursuit denied them; they are poor. Meat and drink, the merest necessaries of life—the things necessary to the animal—are all they can obtain, and of these but sufficient for the day. Yet these men have tastes, eyes, hearts—they would marry—can they ask another to share their starvation? They love, perhaps—they feel that they are loved—the most modest-minded woman cannot always disguise a preference—few men venture on a proposal unless pretty sure that it will not be rejected; they know that she whom they love so fondly is waiting anxiously for the dear words they may not utter. They see her cheek pale, her eye grow dim beneath the heart-sickness of hope deferred, and they retire to their solitary rooms, cursing the hours that gave them birth. With hearts formed to reciprocate every tender emotion, they must carefully suppress them, lest they involve another and a dearer in their trials. For them no wife may watch or smile—no rosy prattler may call them father. They must renounce the silent devotion, the sweet companionship, the endearments of wife and child, though their Creator himself has said, "It is not good for man to be alone." But they are alone—alone in the bitterest sense of the word; alone in an unsympathizing crowd, which jostles them aside in the struggle for bread; alone, with the heaven of family ties open to their call; alone, while the sorrowful look, the deep, deep sigh of the loved one reproaches them for their self-imposed martyrdom; alone, having immolated another at the shrine of their paltry pride. They suffer the privations of an anchorite, without the consolation of his belief.

And the women; for here, as everywhere, they are the greatest, the unresisting victims. Theirs is made a life of disappointment—spiritless, reverseless endurance. Man can seek relief in change of scene, action, and the requisites of his position bear him over the trial—he suffers, and forgets. But they, they are chained to the stake. With more than Spartan heroism they smile on, while the hidden grief devours them. Marriage, the aim for which we were created, is forbidden them. They were born to be wives and mothers. The instinct to love and protect is strong within them; but they must stifle nature and crush their heart-yearnings. Involuntarily they have given that priceless boon, their pure affection; but the words they would give worlds to hear—that alone can justify their attachment to themselves—remain unspoken; and they tremble, lest they have loved unwooed—given themselves unsought. The world blames him, and they defend him; and they meet day after day, till every lingering hope is blighted; but they look their best, and count their stitches. They sit at home in genteel inactivity and misery, condemned to wait patiently for the "good time"—to them never—"coming." Sometimes they are doomed to take their part in the fraud of "appearances"—their hearts beating at the dun's single knock, quaking before the wafered letter, turning and patching, putting the "best foot foremost," and even unsuccessfully feeling that, sooner or later, the game must be over, the veil rent. Or they are driven into the world,—one employment alone open to their gentility. They are governesses—they eat a dependent's bitter bread, deficient of the privacies and comforts of home—their very tears forbidden—for cheerfulness is the first duty of a teacher. Better the humblest home than that state; but, as the world goes, they must suffer on; and yet, if they were wives, what happiness might be theirs! Not as the wives of men below them in intellect or education—that quality can never be conquered—but of educated tradesmen, by whose side they might work, and with whom they could go hand-in-hand through life.

THE DEATH-WATCH.

The ominous death-watch, when drawn from its hiding-place in an old perforated floor or wainscot, picture-frame, chest, or black-lettered volume, comes forth (a mouse from a mountain of fear!) a tiny beetle of some quarter of an inch in length, and in its prevailing hues of grey and brown resembling the color of the time-worn wood, whose decay they help (especially in their grubhood) to accelerate. That alarming "tick," to which at midnight many a timorous heart has beat in unison, is generally to be heard first in May, and on to autumn, by day as well as night; and being considered analogous in purpose to the "call" of pairing birds, has, in reality, as little of ominous about it. The sound is not vocal, but consists of a series of quick, successive beats, produced usually by the striking of the insect's mailed head upon the hard substance whereon it may be standing, or into which it has penetrated, most likely, while a grub.

Such is the living main-spring of the death-watch when taken from out its wooden case; and though all its terrors vanish on being brought to light, it is easy enough to account for their origin in connection with place, time, and circumstance. Most heard in old (perhaps haunted) houses, proceeding from wainscot or from bed's head, perhaps from picture-frame or grim old portrait, as if the "tick, tick" of the invisible time-piece issued verily from the laced fob-pocket of some buried ancestor, or heard, possibly, with creeping awe, to proceed, "tick, tick, tick," from the elmwood of a coffin before consigned with its mute tenant to the earth; heard, too, by night walkers, the sick and the solitary, or night-watchers keeping their vigil beside the dying or the dead,—who can wonder that, with such concomitants, the hearts of the ignorant should have often, and may sometimes still echo, fearfully, the beat of the dead-watch? And, perhaps, with all our little knowledge, our own might, under the circumstances, do the same.

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SABBATH AT ALL TIMES.—By different nations every day in the week is set apart for public worship: Sunday by the Christians, Monday by the Greeks, Tuesday by the Persians, Wednesday by the Assyrians, Thursday by the Egyptians, Friday by the Turks, and Saturday by the Jews. Add to this the fact of the diurnal revolution of the earth, giving every variation of longitude a different hour, and it becomes apparent that every moment is Sunday somewhere.

EVE TO ERNEST.

BY SALLIE M. BRYAN.

I am standing where in spring-time
Timid young moss-roses hide,
Thinking of the night I met thee,
Wand'ring with a stranger-bride,
Where the young moss-roses hide.

All the summer I've been dreaming
Of the years of long ago;
And reproaching angels ask me
Wherefore did I love thee so,
In the years of long ago?

Pale and sad the young moon wander
As she were as lone as I;
And the winds that haunt the midnight
Seem to ask me with a sigh,
If there's aught as lone as I?

With their calm, eternal smiling,
All the cold stars mock me now;
And a quenchless fire is burning
Ashen paleness on my brow—
Yet the cold stars mock me now.

Ernest, Ernest—when *I loved thee*,
Oh, how couldst thou break my heart?
How with cold and tearless languor
Couldst thou tell me we must part,
Knowing thou didst break my heart?

How couldst thou, a kindred mortal,
Mock me with thy bridal bells?
With the many mournful echoes
Of thy careless, faint farewells,
Blending with thy bridal bells?

Ah, I do reproach in madness—
Thou hast found undreaming rest;
Mourning roses from sweet censers
Fling faint perfume o'er thy breast,
While thou triest undreaming rest.

Oh, the evil thou didst give me
On my heart since—*then* has slept—
It has worn its own wild blackness—
While I've mused and prayed and wept,
Through the heart on which it slept.

Ernest—when the cold lid's languor
Closed above thy dark-blue eyes,
Ida did not turn heart-broken
From the sunlight and the skies
Thinking of thy dark-blue eyes.

Ah, my murmuring does not move thee,
Idol of my early trust—
All thy love fled to—another,
All thy beauty's in the dust—
Wasted was my early trust.

THE MISER'S HEIR.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

"I tell you, no, Agnes! I won't have it. The fellow only wants my money. I know him—I know him. I know all these dandified jimcracks. They hang around a few bags of dollars, as crows do around carrion. I won't have any such thing. Now you know."

"Father, you judge Walter too harshly. He is a good man—honest and industrious, and——"

"Industrious, say you? By the big lump, I'd like to know what he's got to show for his industry."

"He has a superior education, father."

"Education! Fiddlesticks! Can he live on his education? Can he make dollars of it?"

"Yes. He can live on it. He has already obtained a good situation as clerk."

"And will earn just about enough to keep him in the fine clothes he wears. I know these fellows. But there's an end on't. If you choose him rather than your poor old father, you can do so. I can live alone—I sha'n't live long—you can——"

"Stop—stop, father. You have no right to talk so. You know I could not leave you." And Agnes Breman threw her arms about the old man's neck, and kissed him, and then she left the room.

"It's curious how these young fools act," the miser muttered to himself, after he had watched his child depart. "There's been twenty of the sharks after that girl—twenty of 'em hovering around her, like man-eaters after a dead body. Don't I know what they want? Can't I see? Aha—can't I, though? It's MY MONEY! But Agnes has never loved one of 'em till this Adams came along. The jackanapes!—And now she wants to get married right away. Nonsense!"

The old man bowed his head as he spoke, and he saw a drop upon the back of his hand. It was a bright drop, and the rays of the setting sun were playing in it.

"She cried when she kissed me," he whispered, wiping the tear from his hard hand. "I don't see what makes her so tender-hearted. She never took it from me. But she may have taken it from——"

The old man stopped, and a cloud came over his wrinkled brow, for there was a pang in his heart. He remembered the gentle, uncomplaining being who had once been his companion—the mother of his child. He remembered how she became his wife, even when the bloom of manhood had passed from him; how she loved him, and nursed him, and cared for him, and how she taught her child to love and care for him, too. And he remembered how she had never complained, even while suffering, and how she had died, with a smile and a blessing upon her lips, though the gold of her husband brought her no comforts.

Noah Breman bowed his frosted head more low, and in his heart he wished that he could forget all but the few fleeting joys of his wife. But he could not forget. He could not forget that it had been whispered how his wife might have lived longer, if she had had proper clothing and proper medical attention.

"But it would have cost so much! I saved money!"

Ah—the reflection would not remove the pang. The other memory was uppermost.

Noah Breman had passed the allotted age of man, being over three-score-and-ten, and all his life had been devoted to accumulating money. He had denied himself every comfort, and his heart had been almost as hard as the gold he hoarded. But as his hair grew more white and sparse, and the years came more heavily upon him, he thought more—reflected more. The sweet smile of his dead wife was doing its mission now; and the pure love of his gentle child was a continual remembrancer to him that there were better hearts than his own.

At length the miser arose, and passed out from the room. He would have left the hut; but as he reached the little entry way, he heard a voice from the garret. It was his child's. He crept up the rickety stairs, and looked through a crack in the door. He saw Agnes upon her knees. Tears were rolling down her cheeks, and her hands were clasped towards Heaven. And she prayed—

"Oh, God! be good to my father, and make his heart warm and peaceful! Make me to love him with all tenderness, and enable me to do well and truly the duty I pledged to my sainted mother! I promised her I would love and care for him always. Father in Heaven, help me! Oh! help me!"

The old man crept down the stairs and out of doors, and for a whole hour he walked alone among the trees. He thought again of his wife—again of his child—and then—of his gold! And this was not the first time he had walked alone there. He did not himself know how great was the influence his child was exerting over him.

Agnes—pure, good, beautiful Agnes—wept long and bitterly in her little garret, and when she had become calm, and her cheeks were dry, she came down and got supper. But she was not the smiling, happy being that had flitted about the scanty board heretofore.

A few days after this, as Noah Breman approached his cot one morning, he heard voices from within. He peeped through a rent in the coarse paper curtain, and saw Walter Adams with his child. Her head was upon Walter's shoulder, and his arm was about her.

Walter was an orphan, and had been Agnes' schoolmate, and her fervent lover through all the years of opening youth. He was an honorable, virtuous man, and loved the gentle girl because she was so good, and so gentle, and so beautiful. And she loved him, not only because he had captured her heart in the time agone, but because he was, of all her suitors, the only one whose character and habits promised joy and peace for the future.

"I cannot leave my poor old father, Walter," the old man heard his daughter say. "I must live to love and care for him. On all the earth I am the only one left to love him. It is hard! My heart may break! But the pledge of love I gave to my dying mother must be kept."

"And so the great joy-dream of my youth must be changed to this sad reality!" exclaimed Walter, sorrowingly. "I cannot ask you to leave your father, sweet Agnes, for the very truth in you which I worship would be made a lie could you do so. But I have a prayer—an earnest, sincere prayer. I pray that God, in his mercy, may remove the curse from your father's bended form!"

"The curse, Walter?"

"Aye—THE GOLD CURSE!" rejoined the youth, fervently. "I hope God may render him penniless!"

"What? Penniless?" repeated Agnes, with a start.

"Aye—penniless! for then he would be far more wealthy than he is now. Then he would know how to appreciate the priceless blessing of his sweet Agnes' love, and then the crust might be broken, and his heart grow human again. And more than all," Walter continued, winding his arm closely about the fair form of his companion, and speaking more deeply, "then I could prove to him my love. Then I could take you to my home—and I could take your father to my home—and we could both love him and care for him while we lived!"

Noah Breman stopped to hear no more, and as he walked away, he muttered to himself—

"The rascal! He'd do great things. Me penniless!—And he praying for it!—The young villain!"

When the old man gained his accustomed walk among the great sycamores, he wiped something from his eye. He acted as though a mote had been blown in there.

Two weeks passed on, and Agnes grew pale and thin. She did not sing as she used to, nor could she smile as had been her wont. Still she murmured not, nor did her kindness to her father grow less.

"Oh, God! help me to love my father!" she prayed one night. "Let not my grief make me forget my duty!"

And the old man heard it.

One night Noah came home from the city, and in his hand he brought a small trunk. He barred the door, and drew the tattered curtains close.

"See!" he said, as he opened the trunk, and piled the new bank-notes upon the table. "Look there, Agnes, and see how I have worked in my life-time. I had no education, but I've laid up money—*money*—MONEY! How many men would sell me all their brains to-night for this! See—one thousand—two—three—four—five— Count them, Agnes. There's a thousand good dollars in each package!"

Agnes counted them over, for she thought her father wished it, and she made fifty packages.

"Why have you taken it from the bank, father?" she asked.

"To let it, my child—to let it at a round interest, Agnes. I shall double it, darling—*double it*—DOUBLE IT!"

And while the old man's eyes sparkled with evident satisfaction, his child wore a sad, sorrowing look. And long after that she sat and looked at the working features of her father, and prayed that the Gold-Fiend would set him free.

When Agnes retired she left her father up; but ere long she heard him put his little trunk away, and then go to his bed. And then she slept.

Hark! What sound is that? Agnes starts up in affright, and listens. But see! A bright light is gleaming out into the night, and thick volumes of smoke pour into the garret!

"Fire! Fire!" sounded a voice from the entry, and she hears the sharp crackling now, and feels the heat. "Agnes! My child!" And in another moment she meets her father upon the stairs. He is dressed, but she is not.

"Take all your clothing, Agnes, and you can put it on in the entry. The house is all on fire!"

In a few minutes more the father and child stood in the road, the latter with a bundle of clothing in her hand, while the former held a small trunk. They gazed upon the burning building, but neither of them spoke.

And others came running to the scene, but no one tried to stay the flames. And the effort would have been useless had it been made, for the old shell burned like tinder. But more still—no one would have made the effort, even had success been evident, for the miserable old hut had too long occupied one of the fairest spots in the village. There were no other buildings to be endangered, so they let the thing burn.

"You have your money safe," said Agnes.

"Yes. See—I took the trunk. I left the candle burning so that I could watch it. But I went to sleep, and the candle must have fallen over. But I got the trunk!" And as he spoke he held it up and gazed upon it by the light of the flaring ruins.

"*That is not the trunk!*" whispered Agnes, in affright.

"Not——" But the old man spoke no further. He saw that he had taken the wrong trunk! This was only filled with old deeds and dusty receipts!

"*Ruined! Lost!*" groaned Noah Breman, as he turned from the scattered embers. "I had fifty thousand dollars in that trunk! And where are they now?"

"Never mind," said Agnes, winding her arm about her father's neck, "we'll be happy without it."

* * * * * * * * * *

"What?" uttered Noah Breman, gazing into Walter Adams's face. "Do you mean that you will give *me* a home, too? That you will provide for me, and keep me?"

"Yes," returned the youth, hopefully. "I could never be happy with Agnes, much as I love her, if I thought her poor old father had no home. Come—we'll live together, and be as happy as the days are long."

"But your salary, young man?"

"Is sufficient for us, sir. I have five hundred dollars a year. We can live well on that, and lay up something, too."

"Well, well—take her—love her—be good to her—make her happy—don't never——"

When the old man saw the joyous tears leap from his child's eyes he turned away and walked quickly from the house; but he was not so quick but that he heard the blessings that followed him. And when he walked alone beneath the starry heavens he wiped his own eyes as though something troubled them.

Gay as a lark was gentle, beautiful Agnes when she became the wife of Walter Adams. The rose bloomed again upon her cheek, and the smiles were upon her happy face like sunshine all the day long.

"Do you pray to God to help you to love me now?" the old man asked, after he had lived with Walter some months.

"Why—what do you mean?" Agnes asked, in surprise.

"You used to pray so, for I have heard you," returned Noah.

A moment the young wife gazed into her parent's face, and then she answered, while she threw her arms about his neck,—

"Oh! I pray that you may be spared to us for long years in peace and happiness; but—love you? Oh! I could not help it if I should try. And Walter loves you, father—he loves you very much, for he has told me so many times."

There was something more than usual in the old man's eye now.

One evening, as the happy trio sat at the tea-table, Walter looked more thoughtful than was his wont.

"What is it, love?" Agnes asked.

"O—nothing," the husband said, with a smile. "I was only thinking."

"But of what?"

"Only castle-building—that's all."

"In the air, Walter?" asked Noah.

"Yes—very high in the air," the young man returned, with a laugh.

"But tell us what it is."

"Well—I'd as lief tell you as not. Mr. Osgood is to retire from our firm in a few days. He is well advanced in years, and has made a fortune in the business, and he will live now for comfort and health alone. He has not been very well of late years."

"And is that all?"

"No. I am to be advanced to the post of head book-keeper, with a salary of twelve hundred dollars."

"And is *that* all?"

"Yes."

"But what 'castle in the air' is there about that?"

"O—that isn't the *castle*."

"Then what *is* the castle?" urged the old man, playfully.

"Why—simply this," said Walter, laughing, but yet almost ashamed to tell it: "This noon Mr. Osgood patted me on the shoulder, and, said he—in his playful way—'Walter, I'll sell you all my interest here for fifty thousand dollars.'"

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Noah Breman, "and you thought he was in earnest."

"No, no," quickly returned the young man. "I did not think that; though I know that the other two partners would willingly have me for an associate."

"But it seems to me old Osgood holds his share in the concern at a high figure."

"Oh, no. It is a very low one. There is a clear capital of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars in the business at this moment; and then think of all the standing and good-will which goes for nothing."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the old man again.

Then Walter laughed; and then Agnes laughed; and then they finished their supper.

On the next evening Walter Adams came in and sank down upon the sofa without speaking. He was pale and agitated and his eyes had a vacant, wandering look.

"Walter!" cried Agnes, in terror, "what has happened?"

"He's sick," muttered Noah Breman, without looking around.

"No, no—not sick," returned the young man, starting up; "but I am the victim of a miserable trifling."

"Eh?—how so?" asked old Noah, now turning his chair.

"I'll tell you," said Walter, with a spasmodic effort. "I had some long entries to post this evening, so I remained in the counting-room after the rest had gone. I was still at work when Mr. Osgood came in and placed some papers on my desk, saying, as he did so—'Here, Walter, these are yours.' And then he went out. When I had finished my work, I opened the papers. The first was a sort of inventory of what Osgood had owned in the business, and footed up, in square numbers, forty-nine thousand eight hundred and seventy-five dollars. The next paper was a deed conveying the whole vast property to me, and making me a partner in the concern upon equal footing with the other two!"

"Well," said the old man, thumping his foot upon the carpet, and keeping time with his hands, "I don't see anything very bad in that."

"But I do," replied Walter. "It is cruel to trifle with me thus."

There was something in Noah's eye again, but he managed to get it out, and then he spoke thus:

"Walter Adams, when young men used to hover about my child, I believed they were only after my gold; and I knew that in most cases I was correct. I believed the same of you. I knew nothing but the love of money that could underlie human action. My heart had become hardened by it, and my soul darkened. But it was for my sweet child to pour the warmth and light into my bosom. It was for her to keep before me the image of the gentle wife whom I had loved and lost, but, alas! who occupied a place in that love second to my gold! It was for my child to open gradually, but surely, the fount of feeling which had been for a lifetime closed up. I heard her pray for me—pray that she might love me—that she might have help from God to love me; and that was after I had refused to let her be your wife. I saw her grow pale and sorrowful, and I knew I had done it—and she loved me still. And still she prayed God to help her.—Help her what? Help her love her father! I was killing her, and she tried to smile upon me. One evening I heard you both conversing in the old hut. My child chose misery with duty to her father rather than break that duty in union with the man she loved. And you uttered a prayer. You prayed that I might be made penniless—— Stop! Hear me through.—— You would then show your disinterestedness. I walked away and pondered. Could it be that I had found a man who would love an old wreck like myself, with no money. If it was so, then that would break the last layer of crust from my soul. I determined to test you. I had gained a glimmering of light—my heart had begun to grow warm—and I prayed fervently that I might not be disappointed.

"I went to the bank, and drew out fifty thousand dollars in bills. That night my miserable old hut was set on—or—a—*caught* fire. I shall always think 'twas my candle did it. But the old shell burnt down, and room was made for a better building. I came out with a wrong trunk, and the other trunk was burnt up. But the money wasn't in it. No, no. I had that safely stuffed into my bosom and deep pockets, and all buttoned up; and the next day I carried it all back to the bank, and had it put with a few thousand more which I hadn't disturbed. And so my experiment commenced; and I found the full sunshine at last. Aye, Walter, I found you the noble, true man I had prayed for. You took me into your home, and loved me when you thought me penniless, and you took my child to your bosom for just what God had made her. And now, my boy, I've been doing a bit of work in the dark. I've paid Mr. Osgood fifty thousand dollars in cash for his share in the business, and it is all yours. And let me tell you one more thing, my boy—if your two partners can raise fifty thousand dollars more to invest, just tell 'em you can put in five-and-twenty thousand more at twelve hours' notice. Tell 'em that, my boy! Tell 'em old Noah ain't quite ashore yet. Tell 'em he has found a Heart—a HEART, my boy! Come here, Agnes—come here, Walter. God bless you both—bless you as you have blessed me!"

Nobody pretended that they had motes in the eye now, for the occasion of the weeping was too palpable.

GO NOT YET.

Go not yet, the night is young,
The moon is scarcely on her way
And the nightingale has sung
But the prelude to her lay.
Go not yet!

Stay, and ease my beating heart,
Panting all its truth to prove;
Why so early wilt thou part?
'Tis the secret hour of love.
Go not yet!

Burning lips shall set their seal
On my passion's bond to-night,
While they eagerly reveal
How thou art my soul's delight.
Go not yet!

Stolen moments, let them be
Witnesses of riper bliss;
All that's past shall seem to thee
But a dream compared to this.
Go not yet.

NOW AND TO-DAY.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

Our to-day's—how inadequately are they appreciated? Now—in which all the blessings of life is alone included—with what strange indifference do we turn from its rich offerings, to feast our eyes on gardens of delight, that spread away, temptingly, in a future that forever mocks us with the unattained? There are pearls and diamonds scattered all along the paths we are treading, but we cannot stop to gather them for looking at the mountains of gold that gleam against the far horizon. All of our unhappiness springs from neglected or misspent hours and to-days. The present moment is God's loving gift to man. In it we weave the web of our future, and make its threads bright with sunshine, or dark with evil and suffering.

"Come and kiss me, papa," cried a voice full of music and love.

But papa was in the passage below, with coat, hat and gloves on, all ready to go forth to the day's business, and little pet Louis was up in his mother's chamber, only half dressed.

"Hav'nt time now, I'll kiss you when I come home," papa answers back, and then starts from the house in a hurried manner.

A pearl lay at his feet, and Mr. Edwards had failed to lift the precious thing. He would have been so much the richer for life.

"Dear Lu!" he said to himself, as he moved along the street, "that kiss would have done us both good, and consumed but half a minute of time: and I hardly think that I shall find another half minute so richly freighted with blessing to day."

At the corner of the next square, Mr. Edwards waited four minutes for an omnibus. It was lost time. Four minutes spent with dear pet Louis, how full of pleasure they would have been—how fragrant their memory through all the day?

When Mr. Edwards arrived at his store neither his morning newspaper nor his book-keeper was there. So, he could neither get at his books, which were in the fire-proof, nor glean from his Gazette the commercial news or state of the markets. No customers were in at so early an hour. And so Mr. Edwards passed the next twenty minutes in comparative idleness, his mind burdened just enough to make him feel uncomfortable, with the thought of little Louis quivering over the covetted parting kiss.

At the end of twenty minutes, the book-keeper arrived. The honey of Louis's parting kiss would have sweetened the temper of Mr. Edwards for the day. Without it, under slight annoyances, his spirit grew sour. He spoke to the book-keeper with slight impatience, and in words of reproof for being late. A sick child was the excuse; and as he looked into his clerk's face, he saw that it was pale with trouble and watching.

Mr. Edwards sighed. The pressure on his feelings was heavier. Everything, during that day, seemed to possess a strange power of annoyance; and to the failure to lift a pearl from his feet in the morning, was added many failures of a like character.

"Will you please to buy an almanac?" said a childish voice near him.

"No, I do not please," was the gruff reply of Mr. Edwards. He spoke as he looked up, on the moment's impulse. The timid, half-frightened face of a tender child, scarcely a year older than his darling at home, glanced upon him for an instant, and then he saw only the retreating form of a little girl. Before his better feelings prompted a recall of his repellant words, she was in the street, and out of sight.

This was a little thing in itself, but it told sharply on the feelings of Mr. Edwards, who was naturally a kind-hearted man. He sat very still for a little while, then, sighing again, went on with the letter he was writing when the little almanac-seller disturbed him at his work. Another "now" had passed, leaving a shadow instead of the sunshine it might have bestowed.

"Can you help me out to-day? I have a large note falling due."

"I cannot," replied Mr. Edwards.

The neighbor looked disappointed, and went away.

Now that neighbor had many times obliged Mr. Edwards in a similar way. Our merchant had no balance over in bank. That may be said for him. But he had money out on call, and could, without inconvenience, have helped his neighbor. He remembered this after it was too late. The "now" had passed again, and left upon his memory another burden of unquiet thought.

And so the hours of that day past, each one leaving some "now" unimproved—some pearl lying by the wayside—some offered blessing untouched; and when, at a later hour than usual, Mr. Edwards turned his steps homeward, he felt as if he had lost instead of gained a day.

Dear Louis! Away, faster than his feet could carry him, went the heart of Mr. Edwards towards his darling boy. Somehow, the father's imagination would present no other image of the child, except one that showed him in grief for the kiss denied that morning.

"Where is Louis?" were the first words spoken by Mr. Edwards, as he entered the room where his wife was sitting. It was at least an hour after nightfall.

"In bed and asleep," was the answer.

At another time this answer would have produced no unpleasant feelings; now it was felt almost like a painful shock.

Mr. Edwards went to the chamber where Louis lay in his little bed. The gas was burning low; he turned it up, so that the light would fall upon his face. How beautiful it was in its childish innocence! How placid! And yet the father's eyes saw, looking as they did through the medium of a troubled state, a touch of grief upon the lips, and a shade of rebuking sadness on the brow of his darling.

"Precious one!" he said, as he bent to kiss the pure forehead. "I wronged both your heart and mine."

It seemed to him, after the kiss and confession, that the sleeper's face took on a more peaceful, loving aspect. For many minutes he stood gazing down upon his unconscious boy; then murmuring to himself—"It shall not be so again, sweet one!"—lowered the gas to a taper flame, and went with noiseless footsteps from the room.

For the gain of half a minute to business, in the morning, what a loss had there been to love and peace, and comfort for the space of hours. Let us take care of our nows, and our to-days; for herein lies the true secret of happiness, and the true philosophy of life.

IMPORTANT TRUTHS FOR WIVES.

In domestic happiness the wife's influence is much greater than her husband's; for the one, the first cause—mutual love and confidence—being granted, the whole comfort of the household depends upon trifles more immediately under her jurisdiction. By her management of small sums, her husband's respectability and credit are created or destroyed. No fortune can stand the constant leakages of extravagance and mismanagement; and more is spent in dimes than women would easily believe. The one great expense, whatever it may be, is turned over and carefully reflected on ere incurred; the income is prepared to meet it; but it is pennies imperceptibly sliding away which do the mischief; and this the wife alone can stop, for it does not come within a man's province. There is often an unsuspected trifle to be saved in every household. It is not in economy alone that the wife's attention is so necessary, but in those little niceties which mark a well-regulated house. An unfurnished cruet stand, a missing key, a buttonless shirt, a clammy spoon, a soiled table-cloth, a mustard-pot, its old contents sticking hard and brown about it, are severally nothings; but each can raise an angry word or cause discomfort. Depend on it, there's a great deal of domestic happiness in a well-dressed mutton-chop or a tidy breakfast-table; and if wives will not attend to these minutiæ, they risk the club or saloon, and their consequences. Men grow sated of beauty, tired of music, are often too wearied for conversation (however intellectual): but they can always appreciate a well-swept hearth and smiling comfort. A woman may love her husband devotedly—may sacrifice fortune, friends, family, country, for him—she may have the genius of a Sappho, the enchanting beauties of an Armida; but—melancholy fact—if with these she fail to make his home comfortable, his heart will inevitably escape her. And women live so entirely in the affections that, without love, their existence is a void. Better submit, then, to household tasks, however repugnant they may be to your tastes, than doom yourself to a loveless home. Women of the higher order of mind will not run this risk: they know that their feminine, their domestic, are their first duties.

WATCH WELL OVER YOUR CHILDREN.

Children can only be preserved in health of body and mind by a constant and minute attention to little things, not only in them but in yourselves. They are watchful and keen observers of all that passes; their comments would sometimes excite your surprise. An acorn contains the germ of the mighty oak; a wanton idea, carelessly thrown on the infant mind, may produce fearful results. They are now plastic, and may be molded at will; but it is long ere you can efface a false impression. You laugh at their childish babble, but see what it portrays: in it you may trace the hero, the philosopher, the coquette, the loving woman. And their joys and sorrows, futile as they seem to us, they are great to them, proportioned to their strength. Our great poet has bid us pity the dying insect's pangs; in like manner dread your children's passions—watch well, but do not tamper with them. Cruelty, vanity, lying, pride, gluttony, selfishness, every evil feeling, may be carelessly fostered in a child, and that by Christian, but unthinking parents. Even the baby in arms can have a kind of education—will give some traits of character—slight, indeed, but indicative to an attentive, vigilant parent. We give them credit for discernment—we allow that they invariably discover their real friends, and turn from the complaisant but hollow admirer—why should we doubt their power of knowing right from wrong? They do; and it is not at all unfrequent to hear a child refuse to obey, because "I am naughty—I won't do it." Some persons love to tease them—to excite their tiny rage—to raise their fears. This is worse than tyranny. Who can answer for the consequences of this folly?—a soured and suspicious temper, weakened health, and injured intellect. And this fearful, life-long misery is too often the price of half an hour's laugh. Watch well, then, over your children; for of a truth small things are great to them.

DIFFICULTY is a severe instructor, set over us by the supreme ordinance of a parental guardian and legislator, who knows us better than we know ourselves, and he loves us better, too. He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper. This amicable conflict with difficulty obliges us to an intimate acquaintance with our object, and compels us to consider it in all its relations. It will not suffer us to be superficial.

ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor.

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CHEAP NEWSPAPERS.

Example is contagious, and if the moral be good there is no staying its progress. Whoever looks at England, or upon Europe, can see how regal courts and institutions, and aristocratic determinations, melt before a bold example of change sown in the popular will. Since the death of Hampden, the English people have not borne constraint without a full sense of its justice or injustice, and a constant readiness to protest against it, and, if need be, to throw it off. They have, consequently, had the freest courts, the fairest justice, and the most unshackled press—save our own—in the world. Yet the English masses have scarcely entered into the enjoyment of these things—especially the fruits of a free press. Why? Because, although interdicted by no statute, a bar of circumstances has been kept up, as absolutely forbidding as the fiat of a judge.

The press—that fountain in this age of all the better springs that move and mold society and the world—has been shut from the common English eye by its gate of gold—its price. The book, the review, the newspaper, for aught of the millioned clod-hopper, might as well not have been. Such is the indirect way by which free constitutions and institutions may be virtually annulled by the few, nor yet seem a palpable outrage of the many. This has been one cue by which aristocracy circumvented an end which it could not obtain by plainly expressed desire or positive force. If "knowledge is power"—and every educated man proves the maxim—then did the few in England and the Old World compass power, when they invented a scale of prices and censorship which should obscure the light they dared not openly interdict.

But the English masses, though full of endurance, are resolute when aroused, and catching glimpses of the "candle under the bushel," have demanded more light—light for all—but not until we set them an example—until America demonstrated, in letters as in other things, that what is good for one is good for all. Our cheap press, and particularly our cheap newspapers, have had their effect upon the Old World, which, by slow but certain degrees, is yielding to the universal demand of the age for a freer circulation of human knowledge—for that glorious interchange of ideas, and humanizing intercourse, of which the noblest and most potent agent is the cheap newspaper.

CERTAINTY OF PUNISHMENT.

Whatever other causes might be cited, as connected with the increase of crime, we think there is one too patent for any observer to doubt its agency. It is the difficulties in the way of convictions. So greatly have these increased of late years, that it is, now-a-days, a common remark, that "no person is convicted of a capital crime, who has money, or wealthy and influential friends." If such an one, perchance, *is* convicted, the pardoning power is almost certain to be interposed!

We have heard various reasons assigned for the facility of escaping conviction complained of, among which is repugnance on the part of witnesses and jurors, to the death-penalty. Without stopping to settle this point, we may safely conclude that the influence of the fact referred to is very pernicious. It has always been our impression that the perpetrator of deliberate crime thinks much oftener of the chances of escape than of the nature of the punishment affixed to the contemplated deed. If this be so, how important that the expectation of *certain* punishment should be present in the minds of the evil-disposed, instead of the expectation of probable acquittal, in the event of a detection. If this were the case, we should soon find the criminal calendar decreased to a most desirable degree.

Cool Impudence.—Enclosing a handbill advertising your wares in a letter envelope, and sending it by post to those whom you *would* make customers, taxing them with the letter carrier's fee. The feat seems to be easily and regularly performed by sundry dealers in this city. We can think of no surer method of leading the victimized recipient to avoid an establishment guilty of such practices.

We don't know of any better way to "pay off" these gentry than to return their "Circulars," through the post-office; and if that won't remedy the matter, advertise the men who resort to such mean, petty tricks, so that people will shun stores that are so meanly conducted. Won't some one try this method? We think it would stop the nuisance.

☞ There are two difficulties in life—men are disposed to spend more than they can afford, and to indulge more than they can endure.

And these two difficulties will prevent any man from making headway in the world. We have often endeavored to show the folly of living extravagantly, or beyond one's means; and until people reform in this particular, it will be useless for them to sigh for what they so much desire—wealth and all its luxurious attendants.

WHERE'S THE ROT NOW?

Sydney Smith wonderfully tickled the spleen of his fellow-Britons with his sneers and sarcasms about the "repudiating" Americans. The clerical cynic had invested in Pennsylvania stocks, and for a time failed to realize therefor; indeed, he got so frightened by his fancies about that State's solvency, that he sold his securities at an "immense" discount. Before Sydney's death, however, Pennsylvania had righted herself, and afforded him an opportunity of seeing what an ass he had made of himself—as wit and financier. Englishmen and the English press have let off a deal of acidity and bile on American account. Our integrity as a people has been variously questioned by them, and the credit and honor of our commercial class has received their unstinted obloquy. According to their view, an American had a little rather make money by swindling than in any other way, and considered it an especially good joke if he could swindle an Englishman. Still, owing to some inexplicable fascination, the American market was a favorite one for English investment, as it continues to be. But all this while our British decryers were as loud-mouthed in boast of English commercial integrity and credit. "An English merchant's word," we were assured, "was as good as his bond—and his bond as good as guinea-gold, the world over." There was no fancy dealing among Britishers—no fictitious capital—no diddling circumlocutions in their trade. It was all flat-footed and above board. If so, what a wreck of so fair a fabric has ten or fifteen years wrought. We shall not cite instances to show the wreck, but simply reproduce a query of the London Time, called forths by the frauds and swindles—by individuals, companies and banks—brought to light by the present financial crisis. "*Is the whole fabric of our* (English) *commercial character utterly rotten?*" asks the Times. It is not for us to say—we hope, we presume not. At any rate, it has come into such suspicious odor at home as makes our reputation smell sweet. We shall not regret this if Britain's tongue is hereby made to wag less against her neighbors.

OUR HERITAGE.

Have not we, the citizens of this country, a truly great and glorious heritage!—one which has brought with it an immense and solemn responsibility?

Who can think of the vastness of our country—the wonderful fertility of its soil—the wide sweep of its forests—its towering mountains, "rock-ribbed, and ancient as the sun"—its wide-spread prairies—its mighty rivers and lakes—its almost exhaustless mineral resources—its varied yet generally temperate climate—without an irrepressible tingle of grateful as well as patriotic emotion in every vein? Surely, no one. It is but reasonable that such a contemplation should excite this sort of feeling. Certainly, it would be strange and unreasonable if it did not.

But, as we have hinted, the possession of this heritage has brought with it responsibility commensurate with its greatness—a responsibility all the more onerous and serious because of the mode and circumstances of the possession. We will, of course, be understood as alluding to our supplantation of the aboriginal possessors—a race who have been justly pronounced heroic beyond the savages of any other clime, and fit associates of the cataracts, the dark woods, and the stupendous hills,—a far nobler race, in many of the elements of a mighty people, than were the banditti of Romulus or the freebooters of Thesius!

To vindicate the Providential award of *such* an heritage by unerring proofs that humanity has not only suffered no loss by this exchange of ownership, but gained thereby, is no small charge upon our people—no slight test of our power to will and to do wisely and well as a nation. So far the promise is good. Time alone can determine as to the fulfillment.

FRIENDSHIP.

What is there in social life more beautiful than friendship? Ancient ethical writers are full of its praise. Historians have given us bright illustrations of its influence upon character. Poets have lauded it with unstinting measure and melody. It has deserved it all, for it is the cement which holds society together. Without it there would be nothing but cold formality, at the best, between man and man. With it, thousands of hearts are made to glow with a warmth which they, otherwise, would never feel. This they give out to the social atmosphere around them, and add to the sum total of hope and joy!

There is something in the history of friendship, as illustrated by the lives of noted historical personages, which is truly inspiring. Such was that of David and Jonathan, as portrayed in the Bible—of Achilles and Patroclus, in the writings of Homer—of Nisus and Euryalus, in Virgil—not to name others. All of these were instances amongst persons of the same sex, and hence we have selected them as examples, for it is of friendship, and not of love, that we are treating.

But friendship may be carried to an excess, as when, adopting the false philosophy of some of the ancients, we perpetrate a wrong upon others for the sake of a friend. To such as may be tempted to so far depart from the right line in this respect, we would commend the famous saying of one of old, who exclaimed, "Socrates is my friend. So is Plato. But truth is before them both."

In our displays of friendship, justice as well as truth should ever be preferred to the dearest friend!

THOSE ELMS.

Dr. Mackay, in one of his letters to the London Illustrated News, speaks of our Broadway as being "lined with elms." Will he please, some time when he has leisure, to show us some of those elms? We have observed Broadway pretty thoroughly, and we doubt if it can boast a single elm. Nor have we been able to discover the superabundance of marble structures on the Fifth Avenue, and elsewhere in Gotham, about which the Dr. expatiates so glibly. Indeed, with all his cleverness as a poet, we fear Mr. Mackay is looking hardly "skin-deep" at us. Our misfortunes in the way of misrepresentation at the hands of foreigners have been manifold; some of them have lied about us willfully, some ignorantly, and some stupidly. Except De Tocqueville, scarcely one of the many Europeans who have written about us has done so fairly or intelligently. We had hoped better things of a "live editor," whose visit is, as we hear, less to lecture than to observe and study the "model republic;" but if his contemplated volume about us is to be altogether as visionary as are portions of his already published letter, he had better entitle it "Fairy Tales about Yankee Land."

What sort of an idea would an untraveled Britisher get of Rhode Island from Dr. M.'s allusion to it as a "neighboring republic?" But enough; Mr. Mackay is a man of sense, and will soon see the necessity of "fixing" his letters and "notes of travel," so that they will not come back to raise a laugh at the expense of his veracity.

FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by Robert Bonner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

READING THE BIBLE FOR HIRE.

"Do you see this gold dollar?"

(Of course the little bright eyes saw it.)

"Well, it shall be yours at the end of the year, if you will promise to read two chapters in the Bible every day."

It seems incredible that any parent or teacher should be guilty of this unwisdom, and yet it is by no means of uncommon occurrence; the child, greedy for the reward, accepts the conditions, and forever after associates the Bible, with its sublime imagery, its beautiful, blessed, life-giving, sorrow-soothing teachings and precepts, with the idea of a disagreeable task. The Bible is too precious a pearl to be thus dissolved by careless fingers, and forcibly swallowed without tasting; anybody who has common sense knows that the palate rejects for food what has once been offered as a pill; dish it up as you will you can never afterwards disguise its odor to the disgusted nostril.

Forbear! says the conservative—you are treading on dangerous ground—and I retort, It is *you* who are treading on dangerous ground. It is you who are making Sabbath-haters, and Sabbath-breakers, and infidels of the worst sort; for there is no unbeliever so rabid as he who, in his youth, has been forcibly tied to the church steeple, and gagged when he dared question the infallibility of the creed upon which he was spiritually nursed. It is that child, who when arrived at man's or woman's estate, snaps the finger at the church-going bell—sees hypocrisy under every white neckcloth in the land—runs to the farthest end of the tether of social license, and hastens to deny an Existence which proclaims itself in every motion of the curiously organized frame: in every little flower revelling in its sweet day of life, content to fade when its heavenly errand is delivered, and its mission over.

Oh, what sadder sight to see, than the brow on which the baptismal seal was set, lifted in defiance to that God who would *draw*, not *drive* us to his arms. Most truly has He said that "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." If one half the wisdom that is brought to bear upon wordly schemes, illuminated spiritual teachings, the Bible would not to so many be stale and weary as a thrice told tale, or be gathering dust when it should be gathering souls.

I know two young girls: one was brought up in a family who thought it right to bribe children to read the Bible; who thought it right when they were guilty of a fault to force them to commit to memory an admonitory verse or two as a penalty; and who, in addition to their daily attendance at school on the present murderous school-system, with the present murderous allowance of lessons out of school, exacted the presence of those children at three services on a Sunday—with Sabbath school in the noon intermission, and the Bible to be read at every spare moment in the home intervals. The very parents who exacted all this from restless childhood were obliged to shorten the dreariness of Sunday *for themselves* by long naps! What wonder that that child hated Sunday? What wonder now that she is a woman she seldom or never enters a church-door? What wonder the Bible lies on her table unopened, and that she has a thorough disgust of hymn-books and vestry meetings?

I know another child who was not taught that the Almighty was pleased with a long-drawn face—who was as free to pluck the flowers that bloomed on Sunday as the one that blossomed on a week-day; who was never taught to "*say* her prayers," although she was shown the prints of *His* stately footsteps in the bright world about her; yet when she is troubled, or when she is happy, the prayer rises as spontaneously to her young lips as the dew to the exhaling sun. God to her is a father, not a tyrant; she goes to Him not at formal hours, but whenever her heart leaps out into unstudied words.

Not long since her mother being obliged to leave her for the afternoon gave her an amusing story book to read while she was gone. On her return she asked, "Well, Katy, how did you like the book?"

"I did'nt read it, mamma."

"Not read it? I thought it was very amusing. What have you been doing then?"

"Oh, I found a Bible, and have been reading it all the afternoon, I liked it so much."

Now do you suppose any child who had had that book drilled into her like a spelling-book from the cradle, would have done that?

Ah no; it came to the little creature with the fresh charm of novelty in all its glorious, simple, eloquent beauty. Thus would I have it! Thus should it ever be read; because it is *loved*—never for *cold duty's sake.*

Fanny Fern.

LITTLE GIRLS.

Of all the abominations which suffering man has to endure in this life, we think that one of the greatest is "little girls." They are always saucy and impertinent when good-natured, and full of snarls and petulance when ill-natured. Besides, they are greedy, and we abominate greediness in every shape.—*Drawing-Room Advocate.*

The above-quoted paragraph strikes us as being out of place in a "Drawing-Room Advocate." Can it be possible that the opinion of the editor has been formed at home, and is the result of observations made in his own drawing-room? For our part, we look upon "a little girl" as one of the most perfect, lovely and winning specimens of the divine handiwork. Sweet as a summer morning's zephyr laden with the fragrance of myriad flowers, lovely as the cherubs that sport amid the bowers of Paradise, joyous as the lark soaring and singing to the heavens' gate, pure as a white-robed immortal, her little heart all full of love, and innocence, and tenderness, she is one of the most beauteous ornaments and best blessings of home, and among the choicest gifts of Heaven to man.

All for Love.—A youth of Baltimore, named Safford, lately put an end to his life by swallowing opium, because of the refusal of a young lady to marry him!

Every few weeks we find an item of the above nature going the "rounds" of the press. It seems to us there can be nothing more silly or indiscreet than a young man manifesting to the world that he feels "sad," because a young lady chooses to "cut" his acquaintance. By attempting to take his own life he gives the strongest kind of evidence that there is something wrong in his "upper story," and that the young lady acted wisely in refusing to have anything to do with him. The young man who would commit suicide under any circumstances, is not fit to be a husband!

☞ We notice in a Columbus paper, that a lady has taken to her bosom a fifth husband, named Dropp.

We think it is high time that that woman *dropped* the matrimonial business. If we were in her present husband's place, we would be momentarily expecting to *drop* off, to make room for another victim.

THE SCHOOL-MASTER.

In a comic almanac, not many years ago, was displayed an engraving representing a man standing on a hill-top, reclining suspiciously against a fence post. The poor fellow was in a "tight" predicament—a quandary—and his mental debate was whether, for the coming winter, he should keep a school or drive a stage. The picture was not altogether a fancy sketch—it was a ludicrous reflection of a very popular impression, particularly in the more back-woods regions, that anybody, almost, was fit to teach a school, as well as to drive a stage. A few years have wrought a great change in this impression—as the State Endowment of Normal Schools for the special education of teachers proves—still there is denied to school-teaching that value and dignity which its genuine professors merit.

The charge of our schools and the direction of the minds of our children and our youth, is the most onerous and honorable task, or duty, a class of our citizens can have imposed upon them. As such it should be esteemed, and when so esteemed there will be competition for the task, and a rise in the general character of the profession commensurate with the esteem. The profession of school-teaching is more essential than that of the law, divinity or medicine, for it has to do with the shaping of universal intellect and morality—with the education of the minds that are to make laws, practice medicine, and preach divinity. The basis of the education of all other professions is laid by the school-master, and deserves to be rewarded according to his rank with degrees, titles, and diplomas, as honorable and expressive as those given to physician, lawyer and preacher.

We regard the good school as the foremost institution, and the good school-master as the foremost man, in the Republic. Our school-houses are our best fortresses, and a well-educated and sound-moraled people are the only army we need to maintain freedom, civilization and christianity. Our system of common schools has already placed us in the fore-front of nations. If "knowledge is power," how mighty must that State be whose millions are all educated—every man a sovereign, not merely by force of law, but also by the divine right of intelligence. All honor then to the real school-master.

"MASTERLY INACTIVITY."

This was a phrase much quoted, a few years ago—quoted, oftenest, only to ridicule it, although it originated with a man admitted, on all hands, to have given proof of rare greatness—the late John C. Calhoun. It was first used by him in an argument against the expediency of the Mexican war. It was meant to urge that the "area of freedom" would be extended with sufficient rapidity, and with a much better assurance of holding peaceably and employing profitably any territory added from other people's possessions, by waiting for the lead of emigration, after the well-known American fashion of "squatting," than by invading wars. It was its seemingly contradictory significance which invited so much ridicule. But it was *only* seemingly contradictory, and there was a deep and hidden meaning in it, which Mr. Calhoun's most determined political opponents could hardly fail to comprehend now, and to applaud also.

This time of fillibustering schemes and movements is a good one to consider the exhortation of the great Carolinian to "masterly inactivity." Is it not being practiced upon by our people, now? While there was "inactivity," as to renewed warfare against the Mexicans, our people were taking "masterly" posession, preparatory to the late Gadsden purchase of fresh territory beyond the once Rubicon-like Rio Grande! And, even now, while the "servants of the people" (?) at Washington are disputing about the right or wrong of Walker's expedition, and Paulding's interruption thereof, our "squatters" are preparing for a future and sure exercise of their "popular sovereignty" in Central America!

Who, in thus viewing the facts of the present, and prospecting the probabilities of the future, will venture to ridicule "masterly inactivity," which is but another phrase for peaceable possession?

A NEW "DODGE."

A citizen of New Jersey, named Judkins, (who says he had never been in New York before his present visit, although he is over twenty-nine years of age,) while walking through Washington Park a few evenings since, was accosted by "a young and handsome woman, who was weeping and in great distress." This young, handsome, and distressed damsel told Judkins that her mother was a widow, once very rich, but now miserably poor, and that she was actually starving for want of food. Judkins, deeply affected, pulled out his pocket-book at once, to relieve this harrowing case of destitution, when the lovely and sorrowing girl snatched it from his hand and darted away with the speed of a doe. Judkins was for a time too astounded to follow, but soon collecting his senses he rushed after the fugitive, who fled along McDougal street. He was on the point of coming up with her when she uttered a scream, and a stout man suddenly darted across the street, and catching Judkins by the collar of his overcoat began to shake him vigorously, and berated him soundly for "chasing a lady in that shameful way through the public streets." He also called for the police, and declared he would have Judkins locked up for an outrageous attack upon a defenceless female. It was some time before Judkins could get a chance to explain, and by that time the handsome thief had disappeared beyond the hope of discovery. On hearing Judkins's story, the gentleman apologized for his mistake and took an abrupt leave. A few minutes afterwards Judkins discovered that his gold watch was gone, and *then* he for the first time suspected what the "gentleman's" true character was.

Punctuality.—Of all things that we detest, the want of punctuality is the most annoying to us. The Ledger has no pity for a man who accomplishes his own ruin by violating his engagements with his fellow men; such a character can never succeed in business. The dilly-dallying habit of making promises which the maker never intends to fulfill, may succeed for a year, but such a course will as certainly sink him eventually in the estimation of his acquaintances, as a millstone, fastened to his neck, would deprive him of life if he were cast into the sea. Punctuality is indispensable to success.

☞ An agricultural work recently published, gives a singular example of the benefits of cleanliness. A pig, washed weekly with soap and water, applied with a brush, will be found to thrive and increase in weight compared with a pig not so treated, in the ratio of five to three.

If some humans would take a hint from the above example of cleanliness, and "apply soap and water with a brush," we doubt not that the weekly announcement of deaths in our city would be materially decreased. By all means, apply the soap and water

WIT AND WISDOM.

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED—PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE LEDGER BY GEO. D. PRENTICE.

One of our jails was lately emptied because it contained a single case of cholera. Many others are kept crowded, until the patients laboring under moral cholera, shall have corrupted the whole mass of their fellow-prisoners. Such of our malefactors as have the disease in the natural way, are employed to inoculate the others, and then we wonder that there is a plague among them. If an offender breaks one of the ten commandments, we send him to a place where he learns not only to break the other nine but to break jail also. We hang rogues on a large scale, but grow them on a larger one.

Old age need not necessarily be felt in the mind as in the body: time's current may wear wrinkles in the face that shall not reach the heart: there is no inevitable decrepitude of the spirit when its tegument feels the touches of decay. We sometimes talk of men falling into their second childhood, when they have really never emerged from their first. Vigorous minds rarely sink into imbecility even in extreme age. Time seems rather to drag them backwards towards their youth than forwards to senility. Like a certain species of thorn, they flower in the Christmas of their days.

Physicians always cherish a sneaking regard for cooks, as more certain and regular purveyors of patients than plague and pestilence; and there is this advantage in their advice, that no two of them agree, so that the taste of an invalid may always be accommodated. Are you out of sorts that your physician has denied you the enjoyment of wine and your favorite dishes? Don't be at all uneasy, for you can readily find one of equal credit who will put you under a regime directly opposite to that prescribed by your own adviser.

Music, like a man himself, derives all its dignity from its subordination to a loftier and more spiritual power. When, divorcing itself from poetry, it first sought to be a principal instead of an accessory, to attach more importance to a sound than to a thought, to supercede sentiment by skill, to become, in short, man's playfellow, rather than his assistant teacher, a sensual rather than an intellectual gratification, its corruption, or at least its application to less ennobling purposes, was already commenced.

The noxious gas is converted into the aroma of the flower, and that which threatened to poison the air affords nourishment and delight. Animals are converted into plants, and plants again become animals;—change of form and not extinction—or, rather, destruction for the sake of reproduction, being a system of nature. Pulverized human bones are used for manure, and the corn thus raised will be reconverted into human bones.

When the learned pig was in the zenith of his popularity, a wag, who attended the performance, maliciously set before him some peas—a temptation which immediately caused the animal to lose his cue. The pig-exhibitor remonstrated with the author of the mischief upon the unfairness of the proceeding, when the latter replied that he "merely wished to see *whether the pig knew his P's from his Q's.*"

A contemporary says that a couple of editors, whom he names, "would, if amalgamated, make a very just medium." We know two, who, we think, would make a still juster one. One of them, unfortunately, is as blind as a bat, and the other, still more unfortunately, is in the habit of seeing double."

A medical correspondent sends us a communication upon the sensation of a man who is hanged. We can see no good reason for publishing it. If our readers are honest, they have no occasion to know how a man feels when he is hung, and, if they are not, they are likely to find out without being told.

We fear that ordination too often consists in investing a man with ecclesiastical authority that he may point out the way to the other world, and surrounding him at the same time with the temptations of this, in order that his preaching and his practice may differ as widely as possible.

"I am willing to split hairs with my opponent all day if he insists on it," said a very distinguished lawyer in a speech at the bar. "Split *that* then," said the opponent, pulling a coarse specimen from his own head and extending it. "May it please the court, I didn't say *bristles.*"

Patriotism is too often the hatred of other countries, dignified as the love of our own—a fanaticism injurious to the character and fatal to the repose of mankind. In the subjects of small States it is more especially odious, for they must hate nearly all of their fellow-creatures.

The young widow, who lately recovered heavy damages from a rich gentleman that hugged her somewhat rudely, should take good care of her money, for she *made it by a tight squeeze.*

A rather boorish country editor tells his readers that there is altogether too much shooting and cutting in our city. We advise him to stay away, for he would probably be "cut" by every gentleman here.

We take the liberty of suggesting whether an engraving of a youth jumping over a fence, and tumbling at full length on the opposite side, would not be a very good representation of Spring and Fall.

We yesterday received an impertinent letter, upon which, although it was duly post-paid, we at once put three additional stamps. We put them with the heel of our boot.

One man may be younger at eighty than another at forty. "Ah, Madam," exclaimed the patriarch Fontainelle to a young and beautiful woman—"if I were only four-score again!"

It is considered very creditable to men to have hearts of oak, but not half so creditable to have wooden heads.

"Sir, you are just like the motions of a dog's tail." "How so?" "Because you are *a wag.*"

CURRENT ITEMS.

A German hunter named Walter, while following a deer, not long since, in the vicinity of Platte River, Minnesota, got lost, and wandered four days in the woods. His gun having got wet, he could neither shoot game for food, nor kindle a fire to warm himself. At last he killed his dog, and eat a portion of his carcass raw. Then stringing the animal's heart and liver, and hanging them round his neck, he wandered on till the next day, when he eat the liver and heart, and then sat down to die. In this condition he was found and carried to a cabin. His boots *had to be cut from his frozen feet*, and both legs amputated above the ankles.

A Frenchman, named Coulon, who had bought a large lion at Cape Town, Africa, shipped him on the British bark Kenilworth for Europe, in the expectation of making a fortune by exhibiting him; but when the bark reached about 12° north latitude, Mr. Coulon, who had became foolhardy in regard to his "pet," imprudently stood leaning his back against the bars of the cage, and the lion seizing him with one of his paws by the side of the throat, nearly tore the unfortunate man's head from his shoulders, and he dropped down dead.

Much discussion has recently been excited in certain "circles" by the discovery by "outsiders" that "advanced spiritualists," of both sexes, in this city, and in Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and other cities, are in the habit of meeting *in puribus naturalibus*—in plain English, in a state of utter nakedness, and of conducting themselves in the most shocking manner. We long since predicted the course the "spiritualists" would run, and are not at all surprised to hear of their having already reached such odious excesses.

A little boy four years old, named George Wilberton, the son of a widow living in Avenue B, was, a few days ago, found drowned in a large swill barrel standing in his mother's back yard. A little toy ship was found in the barrel with him, and it is supposed that the poor child, in attempting to sail his ship therein, lost his balance and fell headlong into the swill, in which he was soon strangled.

As a party of young men were walking recently from Searsburgh, Vermont, to Hartwellsville, a distance of four miles, one of them named Merritt F. Fuller, about eighteen years old, lingered behind, turned off the road towards the house of an uncle of his living near by, walked about twenty rods, stamped around in the snow a few minutes, lay down, and was frozen to death.

A chemical analysis recently made of various liquors sold in one of the low rumshops in this city, showed that there was morphine and prussic acid in the brandy, sulphuric acid in the gin, and kreosote and strychnine in the whiskey. No wonder life is short among the frequenters of such places.

While a company of boys were skating a short time since on a pond near North Haven, Connecticut, a lad twelve years of age, named Gardiner Childs, fell and struck so heavily on the back of his head as to cause his death in a few hours.

Burglars are becoming unusually bold. A few nights since one of them not only carried off the valuables in a house in Chrystie street, but took the owner's wife also, and kept her concealed for over twenty-four hours.

GENERAL MARION.

BY MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

'Twas in the war for Liberty,
Some fourscore years ago,
While o'er the Carolinas roam'd
A stern, vindictive foe,
Fierce Tarleton, with the tories leagued,
Prowl'd everywhere for prey,
And Southern blood flow'd freely forth
As wine on vintage-day.

Then Marion and his merry men
An earnest warfare plied,
Through wilderness or thicket rude,
Like Arabs train'd to ride;
And while their foes' artillery
Dragg'd on with heavy wain,
Like bees they hung o'er flank and wing,
Or captur'd half the train.

Up from the greenwood leaves they sprang,
And nobly stood at bay,
And woe to them who met their shafts
In deadly battle-fray,
For Marion was as brave a knight
As e'er drew spear or lance,
And warmly in his mantling veins
Stirr'd the good blood of France,

Of ancient Huguenot, who cross'd,
For conscience-sake, the main,
And planted in these western wilds
A stock without a stain.
One morning, from the British camp
A flag of truce was sent,
An epauletted officer
Inquired for Marion's tent;

And forth to meet him came a man
Undeck'd by pomp or pride—
True greatness never fears to lay
Prerogative aside;
Yet still within himself he bore
The insignia of control,
Those keen, black eyes, whene'er he spo
Burn'd in the listener's soul.

The business o'er, with courteous air
The chief was heard to say:
"The noontide hour is waning fast,
You'll dine with us to-day."
Low bow'd the guest, yet gazed around,
For nothing met his eye
Like Mother-Albion's rare roast beef,
And porter foaming high.

Naught might his searching glance discern
Save scattered here and there,
Huge piles of that nutritious root,
The humble *pomme de terre;*
And in the fire they roasted them,
Which blazing broad and high,
Peer'd outward through the forest rents,
And gambol'd on the sky.

"Is it a fast, Lord General,
To-day, with thee and thine?"
"Lord me no Lords, Sir Englishman,
Such titles are not mine.
Fast? No, indeed, but rather *feast*,
So well we seldom fare;
Those sweet potatoes, large and brown,
My soldiers gladly share.'

Then with a smile, and knowing look,
The red-coat answer'd back:
"Perhaps, you choose in *malt* to take
Whate'er in *meat* you lack."
"No charge we make for toils like ours
To help our native land,
She hath a right in time of need
To every heart and hand."

With that, those light, blue Saxon eyes
Strain'd open, round and wide:
"I never heard of such a thing,"
King George's man replied;
"*Fight without pay or rations*, sir?
'Tis too absurd and bad!
I knew that you were rebels call'd,
But think you all are mad."

"There is a Book," quoth Marion,
"Wherein a story old
Of one who serv'd to win a wife,
In simple style is told,
Tho' twice seven years he serv'd, they seem'd
To glide with rapid flight,
Love was the talisman that made
His weary labor light."

Then as the wondering messenger
Retraced his homeward way,
Much musing on the novel things
Which he had seen that day,
Up in his mind a moral rose,
Like vision strange and crude,
That men who held such patriot creed
Could never be subdued.

Hartford, Conn., Jan. 14th, 1858.

RICHARD HOFFMAN;

OR,

THE PEASANT AND THE NOBLEMAN.

A TALE OF LOVE AND RETRIBUTION.

CHAPTER XV.

Some minds arrive at a conclusion by the slow and tedious process of deduction, others jump at it. The result is much the same in either case; for instinct, especially where the inferior passions are concerned, bears so marvelous a resemblance to reason, that it would puzzle a philosopher to decide where the former ends and the latter commences.

Now, Jack Manders, being called upon for the first time in his life to form a conclusion, very naturally preferred the shortest and the easiest way—in fact, he had never heard of any other; and the result was, the perfect conviction in his own mind, that uncle Andrew was quite as great a rascal as uncle Mike, perhaps greater. The balance of opinion rather inclined to the side that he was so, and most of our readers, we doubt not, will agree with him.

Had any one told the poor, friendless boy that his well-dressed, respectable-looking relative had committed murder, he would have believed it, without proof, and condemned him, as Judge Jefferies did the unfortunate adherents of Monmouth, in Devonshire, on the strength of his internal convictions of his guilt.

Fortunately for the old steward, the question between his nephew and himself was merely one of wounded feeling and disappointment on one side, and a heartless disregard of the ties of blood and struggling helplessness on the other. Had Mr. Silex stretched forth a helping hand, or only uttered a kind word, which would have cost him nothing, he might have secured a grateful recollection where he had wantonly planted bitterness and resentment.

It was unwise; for such impressions but too frequently grow with the growth, and strengthen with the strength of those who receive them.

Jack's designs for the present were directed to two objects: the first was to discover the abode of the mysterious relative whose acquaintance he had so unexpectedly made—a secret which had baffled all the penetration of Mike, and considerably aggravated his fraternal *fedin's;* the second, to find out the name of the lady who appeared so anxious to place her child under such respectable guardianship; for her child the boy naturally supposed it to be, not comprehending why any one should pay for the support of other people's children.

He had never met with such disinterestedness—no one had ever offered to pay for him.

As to any use the discovery, in either case, might be to him, he left that to Providence. It was the first stroke of business out of his *regular line* he had ever ventured upon, on his own account; and, like a new speculator launched on the world's exchange, he naturally felt hopeful.

Full of determination, Jack proceeded, at an early hour the following morning, to the park—the peak of his cap pulled closely over his eyes, a large worsted comforter twisted carefully round his neck so as to hide the lower part of his features—and seated himself at the end of one of the benches, which, in summer, are generally occupied by sentimental nursery-maids, and the noisy, laughter-loving band supposed to be under their charge. We have often watched these groups, with here and there a red coat, off duty, philandering away the hours he knows not how to dispose of, and a solitary policeman, on duty, giving himself officious airs, and looking dreadfully stern at his military rivals.

The position was well selected, and did great credit to the boy's tactics, commanding, as it did, not only the steps leading to Waterloo-place, but the passage to Spring-gardens, and the long walk extending from the palace to the parade-ground.

If Mr. Silex did, by any accident, happen to pass through the park, his nephew must be blind indeed not to perceive him.

It is astonishing with what patience the boy watched and waited—not even the ice in the inclosure, with its crowd of merry skaters, most of them lads of his own age, or, what appeared still more tempting, the famous long slide outside the rails, could draw him for a single instant from his post: a proof that though his hands and feet might be half frozen, his heart remained warm with the bitterness of resentment.

The only recreation he allowed himself was an occasional short run, accompanied by the swinging of his arms athwart his chest, or, when in serious doubt as to the exact locality of his toes, sharply striking the soles of his bluchers against the trunk of the nearest tree; by way of ascertaining, we suppose, whether the usual inmates were at home or not.

It would have been hard indeed if so much perseverance had failed of success.

Jack had been several hours in the park, when a man and woman, evidently from the country, made their appearance, leading a child between them. After looking around, as if to make sure that they were right in the locality, they seated themselves on one of the benches facing the largest of the butts or counters on which the venders of milk and whey arrange their pans and bowls during the season.

LADY BOOTHROYD BARGAINING WITH "MIKE" FOR THE DISPOSAL OF LILLIAN.

"From the country," thought Jack, after examining them with a critical eye; "something's up."

No wonder that his curiosity was excited, for the female seemed overwhelmed with grief. And yet it could not be poverty; that is to say, poverty according to Jack's idea, that caused her tears. For she was both warmly and comfortably clad, and the child dressed in a velvet mantle, worn over a dark cloth frock.

A more experienced eye might have detected, perhaps, that the mantle was considerably used, and the frock far too large for the wearer. But the boy, although expert in many things, was no great connoisseur in dress.

At first he naturally supposed that they were merely resting themselves, and expected every moment to see them resume their walk. Finding that they remained, he jumped to a second conclusion—they must be waiting for some one. And he asked himself, for whom?

He had not long to wait for an answer to this mental inquiry. Casting his eyes towards the Duke of York's column, he recognized his respectable relative, Mr. Silex, descending the steps with a lady on his arm. And in an instant he understood the whole affair.

"Only to think," he muttered, that I should be the *fust* to see uncle Mike's new parlor boarder;" and strange to say, he began to feel an interest in the child.

With a promptitude that did great credit to his self-possession, Jack darted behind the before-mentioned counter or butt, knelt down upon the snow, and, pulling the comforter from over his ears, prepared to listen.

"You see, Rose, I have kept my word," said Lady Boothroyd, as she approached the bench where Mark Rayner, his wife, and Lillian were seated.

The poor woman regarded the orphan with a piteous expression.

"And I mine," replied her husband, with a flush of shame. God knows how hard it has gone with me. I never thought I should live to turn child-stealer.

"Ho!" thought the listener, "the child has been stolen.

"You see what poaching leads to," gravely observed the steward.

Mark was silenced.

"I should not feel quite so miserable," exclaimed Rose, "if your ladyship would only condescend to tell me what you intended to do with Lilly."

"She is a ladyship, is she?" mentally ejaculated Jack, on whom not a word was lost.

"Provide for her," replied Lady Boothroyd, "handsomely."

"Send her to school," added Mr. Silex.

The boy could not repress a grin at the idea of Mike being intrusted with the education of any one. He had never known him to have but one pupil, and that was himself.

"I have no time to waste on explanations of my intentions," observed the mistress of Meldown Park, haughtily, "nor have you the right to question them. My rank and character ought to be a guarantee that they are kind ones. Give me the child," she added. "*Mr. Silex will arrange the rest.*"

His nephew repeated the name several times, to imprint it on his memory.

Fully believing that by arranging the rest, the speaker meant that the steward would restore the proofs of her husband's guilt, Rose, after kissing the child, placed her little hand in that of her persecutor.

"I'll not go with her!" exclaimed Lillian, fixing her large dark eyes upon the countenance of Lady Boothroyd. "Take me home to uncle Simon and dear aunt Hester."

"She will be very good to you," whispered the woman.

The orphan shook her head doubtfully.

"And send you to school, where you will have playfellows of your own age," added Rose, "and nice dresses."

"A precious lot o' them Mike will give her!" was the mental commentary of Jack on the last promise of the speaker. "Poor little thing! He is more like to strip her of the fine things she has got, and sell them to buy gin with."

It required but little art to persuade the child out of her objection to accompany the fine lady, who was to do such great things for her. Still she parted from Rose reluctantly; and more than once, as her cruel enemy led her triumphantly away, turned and kissed her hand to her.

Of Mark she took no notice, evidently feeling little or no regret at parting from him.

The boy made no attempt to follow them, knowing well enough where they were going to, but directed all his attention to overhear what was to follow between his uncle and the man and woman.

"You have got the ——, you know what I mean," said Mark; "the ——"

"Her ladyship gave it to me," interrupted the steward, "before setting out; but we must have a little conversation first," he added. "Where are the chain and locket?"

"What chain and locket?" demanded Rose.

"The ones Mark took from Lillian," was the reply.

It was perfectly useless for her husband to protest that he had never seen them. Mr. Silex was not to be convinced, added to which it was no part of Lady Boothroyd's plan to part either with the Bible or the leaf, he candidly told him.

"Why should she keep them," exclaimed the guilty man, passionately, "if she intends to act fairly by me?"

"Why should you keep the chain and locket?" retorted the old man.

"I have them not."

His hearer smiled incredulously.

"I'll tell you why *we* intend to keep them," he said.

"I should like to near that," thought Jack.

"Why do children," continued the crafty speaker, "when they catch a bird, tie a string to its leg? Shall I tell you? To pull it back when it attempts to escape—cut short its flight—to have a hold upon it. You are the bird; the string is round your leg—neck, perhaps, would have been a better word, only I don't wish to make any remark that might sound unpleasantly. Keep your proofs; we will guard ours. You see the game—check for check. Clever, isn't it?"

"Rascally, you mean," ejaculated Mark, indignantly.

"In this world you will find them much the same thing," philosophically observed the old man.

"Had I known——"

"But you didn't know—you couldn't know," interrupted Mr. Silex, a second time. "How should you? Still, it is her ladyship's intention to act liberally by you. You are about to emigrate—a prudent decision; but it will be a still more prudent one never to return to England. Great people do not like to live in fear. You understand me? Here are a hundred pounds," he added, "to pay your passage out."

"But the child?" exclaimed Rose, who, in the midst of her terror and anxiety for her husband's safety, could not forget poor Lillian, and the wicked part they had been driven to act towards her.

"The child will be taken care of," replied the steward, at the same time placing the notes in the hands of Mark Rayner. "You understand your position, are aware you have had a lucky escape; for if Sir Norman had only known——"

At the name of the baronet husband and wife both shuddered.

"Sir Norman," repeated Jack to himself; "another name to think of."

The gentleman looked at his watch, and observing that it wanted a quarter to one, directed the unhappy dupes of Lady Boothroyd's promises to remain where they were till the clock of the Horse Guards should strike one. This arrangement would give him time to reach the carriage of the baronet, which was waiting for him close to the column in Waterloo-place. He did not wish the servants to recognize either Mark or his wife.

As to being followed by any one, the idea never once entered his imagination. He had quite forgotten his nephew.

"The villain!" muttered the man, crumpling the notes together. "Oh, Rose, Rose! what have my recklessness and imprudence brought you to? A felon's wife, nay, almost a partner in his crime. I shall go mad to think of it."

The concealed listener had no time to attend further to their conversation; his aim was to follow his uncle, track the old fox to his covert, and then smoke him out, or, in other words, employ the knowledge he had obtained to the best advantage. Mike, he knew, would stand something handsome for the discovery.

Like many older and more experienced generals, Jack had never calculated on the strategy of the enemy. Great was his mortification, therefore, when after dodging him from tree to tree, and creeping up the steps on his hands and knees, he reached the topmost one just in time to see him drive off in the dashing, well-appointed equipage.

In the bitterness of his disappointment he had one consolation. He had not been recognized, and that was something.

Most boys of his age would have given up the pursuit, confessed themselves baffled, and thought no more upon the subject. Not so with Jack: he had been trained in a very different school—cunning and danger. A few moments' reflection decided him how to act.

Taking from his jacket a neat-looking pocket-book—the possession of which might have puzzled him to explain—he ran back to the spot where Mark and Rose were still seated, waiting the signal which was to release them.

"Please, who was that old gentleman I saw you talking with just now?" he exclaimed, apparently very much out of breath.

"Why do you want to know?" demanded the former.

"See what he has dropped," replied the boy, "I tried to overtake him; but he rode away in a fine coach before I could get up to him."

The possibility that it might contain the fatal leaf from the Bible struck both husband and wife.

Mark eagerly demanded to see it.

"Can't you see it?"

"But I wish to examine it."

"That wouldn't be honest!" exclaimed the lad, with an expression of well-affected frankness. "Why, I havn't looked into it myself."

"We will restore it to him," suggested Rose.

"And get the reward. No, I thank you."

A few moments' reflection convinced the unhappy pair how unlikely a thing it was that Lady Boothroyd should have parted with the proofs, even to her confident; or that he would have brought them with him. It could do them no good to prevent the pocket-book being restored to its owner.

"His name is Silex," said Mark.

The querist knew that much already.

"He is steward to a very rich gentleman, Sir Norman Boothroyd," added Rose, struck by the seeming honesty of the lad, "but we cannot tell you where he resides in London; most probably, though, with his master."

"And where does his master live?" demanded Jack.

"We do not know—the family have only just come to town. The residence of Mr. Silex in the country is called the Home Farm, St. Faith's, Devonshire."

These were a great many names to recollect, but somehow, although he could neither read nor write, Jack did contrive to recollect them. He had a peculiar system of mnemonics of his own—a system which danger and crime had taught him.

Thanking his informants for their kindness, he quitted them, not without a secret contempt for their lack of intelligence.

"No wonder," he thought, "that uncle Andrew made such fools of them: they could no more smell a dodge than a canary could a mouse."

The track was getting more easy to follow: one clue more would bring the steward and nephew face to face.

Whilst the scene which we have described was being acted in the park, the returned convict was on the watch in his cottage, waiting like some spider in its web in expectation of its prey. As the hours passed on, he began to feel impatient, and the suspicion that his brother had been jesting with him crossed his mind. It was soon, however, dismissed. Whatever else his peculiarities, Andrew had never been remarkable for a playful humor. Besides, he could have no motive for trifling with him, and Mike was a great judge of motives.

A knock at the door put an end to his cogitations and surmises on the subject.

"Come in," he shouted, briskly.

The next instant Lady Boothroyd, thickly veiled, entered the wretched abode, leading Lillian by the hand. Her ladyship's first act was to close the door; her next, to take a chair.

"A woman of business," thought the man, watching her movements attentively.

"Are we alone?" inquired his visitor.

"Quite alone, marm," answered Mike; "if you have anything to say to me."

"You have been represented to me," said the artful woman, "as a person who may be trusted."

"With untold gold, marm," exclaimed the convict, clapping his hand upon his breast, as if calling upon his heart to witness the truth of his assertion; and trying, at the same time, to look exceedingly honest.

"That is not exactly the kind of confidence I wish to place in you," observed the lady, drily.

"Well, marm, it might have been; I am quite ready to take charge of anything—it will be quite safe in my keeping—I've the best of characters, and can——"

"No doubt!" interrupted her ladyship, somewhat impatiently; "but it is perfectly unnecessary for you to tell me so: I informed myself *thoroughly of your character*, before I decided on employing you."

"That willain Andrew has been splitting on me," thought Mike; "his own twin brother, too."

"I wish to ascertain," continued the speaker, "whether you are disposed to take charge of a child?"

"A child!" exclaimed the ruffian, with affected surprise. "It ain't much in my way, but perwided it ain't a baby——"

His visitor pointed to Lillian.

"Well, she is a pretty creature," he continued, in what was doubtless intended to be a very soft, affectionate tone; "come here, my love."

The child instinctively shrank from him, and clung to Lady Boothroyd.

"Unfortunately she is illegitimate," said the latter, and cannot be acknowledged. She is also exceedingly obstinate," she added, "and requires a firm hand to restrain her."

"I am firm enough, marm," replied Mike, scowling on Lillian for the repugnance she had involuntarily displayed; "and as to her being ill—ille—I know what you mean, though I can't exactly remember the word—it don't so much matter; you ain't the first woman," he added, "who has met with a misfortune."

"What does the wretched man mean to insinuate?" exclaimed the mistress of Meldown Park, greatly shocked at a supposition so offensive to her chastity; which being the only virtue she possessed, she naturally felt the more tenacious of.

"It's all right, marm," said Mike, with a knowing wink; "no offence."

A little reflection convinced his visitor how absurd it would be to argue on such a point with the fellow; and, after all, the idea was not unfavorable to her view. Curiosity she well knew to be inseparable from vulgar minds, and by letting him entertain his opinion, the probability was in favor of his making no further inquiries respecting her.

The pecuniary part of the transaction was soon arranged. Fifty pounds were to be paid annually, and in advance, for the board and *education* of Lillian.

"I forgot to add," said the unprincipled woman, as she rose to depart, "that the child is entitled to five hundred pounds."

"Is she, though?" exclaimed Mike, secretly wondering at the confidence so unexpectedly placed in him.

"*Which, in the event of her death,*" continued the lady, "*I should feel it my duty to pay over to you,* in consideration of the trouble which you will doubtless have had with her—provided, of course, that you take proper care of her."

"I'll take care of her," muttered the convict.

"And are kind to her?"

"As kind as you desire, marm," replied the ruffian. "But suppose now anything should happen to her," he added, speaking very deliberately, "and some children is very delicate, how am I to let you know of it?"

"I shall send a person in whom I can confide, every six months, to see the child," answered her ladyship.

"Couldn't I call anywhere?" suggested Mike, insinuatingly.

"No."

"Or write?"

To this modest proposal the negative was pronounced in a tone still more decided than to the first, and the speaker took her leave. She was far too wary to be caught in that springe.

Lillian, terrified at being left alone in such a wretched-looking place, attempted to follow her, but the master of the cottage dragged her roughly away, threatening, with fearful curses, to twist her neck if she cried or stirred.

"Sit there," he said, forcing her into a chair in one corner of the room; "and only let me see you move, that's all. I'll soon teach you."

The sobs which, despite her efforts to repress them, would break convulsively from time to time from the helpless orphan, and the mute agony of her looks, failed to make the least impression upon Mike; in fact, he had something else to think of. The parting words of his visitor still rang in his ears: they had produced the effect the speaker calculated.

Five hundred pounds in the event of the death of his charge! He had never been the possessor of such a sum in the whole course of his career of crime. It appeared enormous to him; and yet how easily a little exertion and honesty might have made him the master of it.

Five hundred pounds! It was independence—positive wealth, according to his estimation of money.

"Why didn't she speak out?" he muttered. "Women always shilly-shally with what they wish. Not that I'm *again* to run any risks—no, no. Too wide awake for that; but it is an awful lot of tin," he added, musingly, and his eyes sparkled greedily as he mentally calculated all that it would purchase.

Then the thought of Andrew's threat, that it would cost him his life if he harmed the child, occurred to him, and somewhat checked his imagination.

"She is one day to be worth her weight in gold to him," he said, repeating his words. "I wonder what she will be worth to me!"

The answer was still the same—five hundred pounds.

There seemed to be a sort of magic in the sum. Mike had heard of such an amount before—nay, of much larger ones; but never had his mind grasped the idea so completely. He counted upon his fingers how many tens and twenties it would make, divided it into fifties, and, if his arithmetic had carried him so far, would have reduced it to half-crowns, shillings, sixpences, and pence, in order to form an exact estimate if its value.

Although sorely tempted, he came to the conclusion to do nothing rashly. In the first place, he wanted to be assured that in the event of any *accident* to his charge, the money would be really and truly paid; for he was quite shrewd enough to know that there was no recovery upon a verbal promise in a court of law. Besides he had had enough of law: its chances had been unfavorable to him. In the next, how the affair might be arranged in a business-like manner without danger to himself.

The last consideration, however, embarrassed him the least; for, as he before observed, "some children are uncommon delicate."

"Only think, now," soliloquised Mike, in a philosophic vein; "five hundred pounds agoin', a begging! Its aggrawatin' to think on it. Five hundred pounds, just for placing one's hand over her mouth for a few minutes, and stoppin' her breath! I could do it as easily as—but then——"

It is astonishing what power those two words have exercised in the world, both for good and evil. *What then* have cooled the courage of many a desperate man, kept rogues within the pale of legal honesty, arrested hands upon the verge of crime, and sometimes driven them to commit it, in the vain hope of concealing it. They exercise also a political influence. Many a member would sell his constituents; ministers betray their country and perpetrate jobs too scandalous even for the cynical age we live in to pass over in silence, but for the terrible question, "What then?" They form, as it were, part of the police of society, and are most efficient in the preventive service.

Mike's reveries were broken by the return of Jack, who affected great surprise on seeing Lillian, and asked all kinds of embarrassing questions respecting her. Who was she? would she stay long with them? what was her name, and how came she here?

"You are plaguy curious," exclaimed the old convict, impatiently; his conversational powers, nearly exhausted by the succession of falsehoods he had been forced to tell. "She is the daughter of a friend of mine; 'ill remain here just as long as I please; and her name is—what is your name?" he added, roughly.

"Lilly," answered the trembling child.

"Don't speak so gruffly," said the boy; "you frighten her."

"I shall speak as I please," was the reply.

Jack's heart was naturally a kind one, but his affections had run wild, for want of proper hands to train them. We do not mean wild, in the ordinary acceptation of the word: he was too young for that, but just that sort of wildness which renders youth unsettled. Children require some one to love as well as to look up to. It is the strongest instinct of their nature. Had he had a mother or sister, ten to one but what he had turned out a very different character. But the poor boy had only his uncle Mike; and our readers are aware how impossible it was even for the most loving disposition to attach itself to him.

The want of something to rest his heart upon had shown itself in his kindness to little Mary, and his rough and ready sympathy with Richard Hoffman. It had now discovered another object; and acting under the same mysterious law which leads the solitary plant rooted in some dark and humid cell to direct its sickly leaves towards the only ray of light which penetrates it, Jack turned towards it intuitively.

If Mr. Silex had an enemy, poor Lillian had a friend.

"Don't cry," he said, taking the child by the hand. "Uncle Mike is very rough in his speech, but he won't harm you."

The convict uttered an inarticulate "Umph!" and Lillian looked up in the face of the boy, and tried to smile.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was many a long year since Mike had been so flush of cash, and he determined to indulge the coarse passions of his nature by what he called enjoying himself—in other words, to drink and swill at his ease in one of the low pothouses in the neighborhood. In order to do this without risk of his charge escaping, Jack was ordered to remain at home, and for two days the boy never quitted the house. It was no great punishment to him, for, without knowing why, he already detested the mode of life to which his uncle had trained him.

It is not to be supposed that this repugnance arose from any moral consideration. The danger attending his exploits, perhaps, might have something to do with it, as well as the mysterious disappearance of Richard Hoffman, for both weighed upon his mind, which, as far as right and wrong were concerned, was a mere blank. He certainly understood that certain things were punished, provided they were found out—had heard of laws and magistrates, and knew what the police was for; but of honesty as a principle—a rule to be the guidance of his conduct towards his fellow creatures, he was as ignorant as though the divine command had never been given.

How many hundreds, nay, thousands of children in this vast empire, are in the same condition! Our streets teem with them—our gaols yawn to inclose them! From the dark alleys, where the stagnant air is laden with miasma, the narrow courts, the nameless dens, they are belched forth to infect society, the seed of a future pestilence—victims making victims.

Not one of these helpless creatures—born in ignorance, reared in ignorance, living in ignorance, and, what is far more appalling, destined to die in ignorance—but, under other auspices, might become valuable members of society, add to their country's strength, instead of weakness, assist her industry, develop the resources of her colonies, and act a useful part in the great drama of humanity.

Let any man try to enter into conversation with one of these little outcasts, and he will be struck by one of two things: his advances are either received with shyness amounting to terror, or a degree of effrontery still more painful to contemplate. Why is this? Young as the urchin may be, he feels that he is already at war with society, or destined to become so, and he cunningly attempts to deceive, or insolently brave it. He looks upon the well-dressed portion of his fellow creatures as his natural enemies, and his feelings betray themselves according to age or hardihood.

The embryo felon is right. Society is his enemy, for it has left him in ignorance, instead of educating him; drawn the best trumps from the pack, and, confident in its strength, plays the game of life against him.

How frequently do we hear those who have never contributed a shilling towards the education of the poor, complain of the prevalence of crime, suggest plans for prison discipline, penal colonies, and the employment of convict labor. They had much better turn their attention to schools—they will be found cheaper in the end.

Prevention is better than cure, and on this principle we prefer schoolrooms to reformatories. Not that we consider the latter unnecessary; far from it; they have done, and are doing, excellent work.

But why wait till the spring is sullied, the sapling bent, the disease developed, when the means of avoiding so great a portion of these miseries are at hand, easy of application, and comparatively inexpensive.

Should any one accuse us, in consequence of these observations, of wandering from our legitimate sphere, we boldly answer—No; our office is to instruct as well as amuse. A great truth may be advocated even by a novelist; and possessing, as the LEDGER does, an almost unrivaled power of publicity—a voice, as it were, at every fireside in the Union, we should ill perform our duty if we did not constantly utter through its pages thoughts for age to dwell on—subjects worthy the ambition of the young.

There is a kind of freemasonry in childhood; it requires no introductions; innocence introduces itself, ignores the distinctions of social rank, and, in making a friend, never inquires where the object of its preference banks, or whether, in a worldly phrase, the acquaintance is likely to prove an eligible one.

It is a happy thing that it is so. Such lessons are inculcated and acted upon quite soon enough.

The two days that Jack and Lillian were left in the cottage together, were quite sufficient to make them understand each other; the orphan felt that she had acquired a friend, almost a protector, and the boy, that he had at last found something more intelligent than a dog or a rabbit to place his affections upon.

Jack never seemed to tire in his endeavors to amuse his little playfellow. From the first night he had given up his bed to her, an arrangement that uncle Mike wondered at, but did not object to, for the room—if the gloomy den over the outhouse might be designated one—was lit only by a narrow skylight in the roof, far too high for a child to reach, and the door had a lock to it, advantages which did not escape the calculation of the convict.

The boy had made himself a sleeping-place at the head of the stair-case. True, the night wind blew keenly on him from the broken window, and the draft from the kitchen came whistling up with a low, moaning sound, but he paid little attention to either of these inconveniences. He was used to the night air, and if, by chance, he awoke, and found himself unusually cold, he curled himself up with his head under the bed-clothes, and slept till morning, or the return of Mike drunk from the pothouse, caused him to run shivering down the creaking stairs to let him in.

In the morning Jack was the first up, the kitchen made as tidy as he knew how to make it, the fire lit, and breakfast ready before he called Lillian. Twice on entering the room he had found her upon her knees, and her hands clasped together by the side of the trundle bed; and though he had but a faint idea of what she was engaged in, a feeling of awe came over him, and he crept silently away, not to disturb her.

The third time he caught her thus occupied, he determined to ask her about it.

"Lilly," he said, when she descended, "what were you a doin' just now?"

"When you came to call me?"

"Yes."

"Saying my prayers," answered the child, astonished at the question.

"And to whom do you pray?"

"To God."

"Who taught you?"

"Mamma," replied the orphan, her eyes filling with tears, "a long while ago."

"There, don't cry!" exclaimed the boy, kissing her; "I won't tease you any more about it."

"You don't tease me."

"Don't I? Well, then, isn't it odd that no one taught me to pray to him?"

"Perhaps you had no mamma," suggested Lillian, innocently.

"I must have had a mother, which is the same thing, I suppose," said Jack, "only I can't remember her, though I often try. I thought people only said prayers when they went to church, and one must dress fine to go there," he added; "I know that, for I have often watched them in on a Sunday."

"And did you never go?" inquired the child.

"Lord, Lilly!" exclaimed the boy, "what should I do there?"

"Pray, as other people do. Do you never pray?"

"I used to do to Mike, to let me off when he was a-goin' to larrup me," answered the lad; "but he doesn't try it on now. The last time his shins was black and blue for a fortnight, so he found he'd got enough of it. What do you say?"

"Shall I teach you?"

"If you like," answered Jack, hesitatingly, for he felt a singular sensation creeping over him.

"You must kneel, then."

"Kneel?"

"Yes," said Lillian, seriously. "Mamma always made me kneel when she taught me."

For the first time in his life, the knees of the young outcast were bent where they cannot be trained to bend too early, and he repeated the words of the Lord's prayer as they fell from the lips of his instructress. There was much in it that he could not comprehend.

"What do you mean," he asked, "by 'Give us this day our daily bread?' I thought people had to work for it, or steal it."

"God knows," was the reply.

"And 'Deliver us from evil?' " he added.

Lillian's answer was still the same.

Jack Manders did not forget the latter phrase. It seemed to have made a peculiar impression on his mind, and several times in the course of the day he repeated it to himself, musingly.

The heavy footsteps of Mike upon the stairs put an end to his questioning. Lillian shrunk into a corner, and the boy began to busy himself about the breakfast.

The convict was in no very amiable humor. His eyes appeared bleared and red from the over-night's debauch; he loathed the very sight of food, but eagerly poured cup after cup of tea down his parched throat.

"What is the fool a-starin' at?" he exclaimed, scowling on the child, who, fascinated by terror, could not take her eyes off him.

"Don't speak so roughly, uncle," said Jack; "you only frighten her."

"And why should I frighten her?" demanded the brute, savagely.

"She ain't used to you yet."

"You're a-gettin' as great an idiot as the gal," muttered the convict; "but it all comes of staying at home, eatin' and drinkin' and doin' a nothink. You'd better be off," he added, "and see what you can pick up—I ain't a-goin' to keep you in idleness as I have done."

The assertion was rather a modest one, considering that for years the boy had kept him.

Never had Jack felt so disinclined to quit the house as on that morning, but there was no help for it; it was only by bringing him money that he could hope to keep his task-master in good humor. He lingered as long as it was possible, saw that Lillian made a good breakfast, and when he bade her at last "good-bye," promised soon to be back to her.

"Come here," said Mike, addressing the child, as soon as they were alone.

With desperate courage the orphan advanced to him.

"That's right," he continued; "now, mark me: You see that door; if you attempt to pass it, without my leave, I'll cut the flesh off your very bones—do you hear?"

"Yes," gasped Lillian.

"See you mind me, then—I ain't a-goin' to stand no nonsense with you, I can tell you."

During the morning the convict absented himself for nearly an hour, carefully locking the door after him. On his return he brought several bottles of gin with him, two pipes, and some tobacco which he placed upon the table. From this arrangement it was evident that he expected a visitor.

"Sit there," he said, pointing to a stool near the fire. "I don't want to keep you a-shiverin' in the cold."

The little victim obeyed.

"Where do you come from?" he added.

"From a long way over the sea."

"And have you no father or mother?"

"No, they are both dead," answered Lillian, bursting into tears.

"I thought as much," muttered the wretch.

He could draw but little further information from her, which was not very surprising, seeing that Lillian was only six years old when she left India, and till the last few weeks had spoken but little English. All she remembered was that her papa used to wear a red coat, with gold somethings—she had forgotten the name of them—upon his shoulders, and a sword by his side. That he died first, and her mamma a few days after him.

"An officer," mentally ejaculated Mike. "I'll be bound," he added, "that Andrew knows all about her; only to think of his being so close with his brother, and we are twins, too! but I'll learn all about her, too, afore I've done, cunning as he thinks himself."

Having come to this praiseworthy conclusion, he lit his pipe, and gradually fell into a profound meditation, which was only broken by the impatient glances he cast from time to time at the window.

The party he was waiting for, and had sent his nephew out to avoid meeting, had not yet made his appearance, a delay which the impatient host considered very unhandsome, after the preparations he had made to entertain him.

We must now follow Jack, who had hitherto pursued his peculiar avocation in the parks, the purlieus of Westminster, and Parliament-street—rarely had he ventured beyond Charing-cross. This time, however, he determined to vary the field of operation. The old ground was too dangerous; every policeman, as he passed him, appeared to eye him suspiciously. So he walked nervously on till he found himself in Regent-street, which at that early hour was nearly deserted, so that he had ample time to gratify his curiosity by taking a good look at the jewelers' shops, and wondering in his ignorance what the golden glittering things he saw there could be meant for.

Anon the streets began to fill; yet he saw no opportunity of exercising his craft. The weather was cold, every one walked briskly, and were closely buttoned up,—a reason which may account for the fact that not half so many pockets are picked in winter as in summer.

"I shall have no luck to-day," he thought.

Then he remembered the prayer Lillian had taught him, and muttered to himself the words, "*Deliver us from evil,*" and again wondered what they meant.

Although yet a stranger to honesty as a principle, it was evident that he had no inclination for his task, for he suffered opportunities to escape him which a few weeks previously he would fearlessly have seized upon. Heart and hand both felt unnerved; and yet how readily each would string themselves to work. But that appeared hopeless; as he told his uncle, he wanted a character, and could find no one to give him one.

Youth would do well to reflect that labor, no matter how skilful or willing, without character is—like an anvil without a hammer, a saw without a handle—comparatively useless. Character should be the workman's first stock-in-trade, industry the next. Time and perseverance will do the rest.

In this musing, listless humor, Jack had wandered as far as the entrance to Regent's Park, when a carriage passed him. In an instant he became all life and activity, for he recognized the brown and orange liveries of the servants.

It was the same his uncle Andrew had been driven away in.

Without a moment's hesitation or reflection, the boy took to his heels and followed it; and, after running till all but out of breath, had the satisfaction of seeing it draw up in front of one of the stately mansions not far from Chester-terrace. A domestic in similar livery opened the hall door as a lady and child alighted.

Jack grinned with delight. The clue was found at a moment when he had neither been searching nor thinking of it.

As the vehicle drove round to the stables, he advanced, and boldly inquired of the porter if Sir Norman Boothroyd did not live there.

"What can you possibly have to say to him?" demanded the pampered menial, with a stare of surprise.

"It aint him," replied the lad; "it's Mr. Silex."

"Mr. Silex?"

"Yes! Mr. Andrew Silex, the steward."

"And what do you want with him?"

"Perhaps he wouldn't like me to tell you," answered Jack.

The porter thought so too; and as the steward was a person whom few cared to offend, he directed one of the footmen to call him; prudently remaining in the hall himself, with an eye to the safety of the coats.

In a few moments the old man made his appearance. His countenance changed to a cadaverous hue when he saw who it was that had inquired for him. The idea of being tracked so perseveringly by a mere boy, and hunted down at last, had never struck him. The boy took off his cap, gave him a repetition of the bow with which he had saluted him on Westminster Bridge, and, with an arch smile upon his features, asked him how he did.

"You here?" said Mr. Silex.

"Yes, uncle."

His relative did not ask this time what he wanted; it would not have done for the servants to have heard the reply. "A character, if you please, uncle," which he doubted not would follow.

The steward was a man not only of decision of character, but, what is much more rare to meet with, great promptness in his decisions. All ideas of hostility on his part, that is to say overt hostility, of course were at an end; *he was disarmed*, and he accepted the defeat without attempting to disguise it to himself.

"Give me my hat, John," he said.

The porter brushed it carefully before handing it to him. Perhaps he was in hopes of hearing something further, for his curiosity was excited; if so, he was doomed to disappointment, for the old fox did not address another word to his nephew while they remained in the house.

"And my coat, if you please," added Mr. Silex, blandly.

The servant gave it him.

When dressed, Mr. Silex beckoned Jack to follow him, and they walked into the park together, for some time in silence. Not that he required time to collect himself, or arrange his plans. They were settled already.

"Why do you call me uncle?" he demanded turning suddenly round on the boy, as soon as they reached one of the retired walks.

"Because you are," answered Jack.

"Pooh, pooh! nothing of the kind."

"It won't do!" exclaimed his nephew, with a broad grin: "did not I hear every word you said to Mike about mother and me, after you had settled for Lilly; and the lady who was to bring her? I know who the lady is, too," he added, "and where St. Faith's is, the Home Farm, and all about you."

"Umph! rather a clever boy," muttered the steward.

"I am not quite a fool, uncle."

"Evidently not. And does Mike know of this discovery?"

"Not yet. I only found you out myself this morning, by *follerin* the coach you rode home from the park the other day in."

A smile of satisfaction played for an instant on the thin lips of the old man, and disclosed his very peculiar teeth. Jack did not much like the look of them. A vague impression entered his head that his very respectable relative could give an awful bite; and he felt somewhat more comfortable when the aforesaid lips were compressed together again.

"*My dear boy,*" said Mr. Silex, speaking in his very softest tone; "it is necessary that we should understand each other. You are quite intelligent enough to feel the impossibility of my acknowledging the relationship between myself and Mike. It might cost me my place, in the first instance; and could do him no good, in the second."

"He is a rum 'un!" gravely observed Jack, who had been straining the intelligence his uncle had complimented him on to the utmost to comprehend him.

"But with you," added the steward, "it's a very different thing. In fact, I have half made up my mind to try and do something for you."

"Have you, though?" ejaculated the boy, and his little round, dark eyes sparkled hopefully.

"Yes. You say you want a character."

"That's all."

"And are anxious to work."

"Only try me."

"I will try you," said Mr. Silex, emphatically. "You shall go with me into the country; I start in a few hours, and I will employ you on a farm. It's a nice place, and farming is a very pleasant life. Of course," he added, "I can't expect much from you at first. All you will have to do is to ride on horseback through the fields and see that the laborers do not neglect their work. You can read and write, I suppose?"

Jack hung his head despondingly.

"No matter," added the old hypocrite, encouragingly; "they are soon learnt. The winter evenings are long, and I shall find time to instruct you."

All this, especially the horse, sounded very magnificent in the ears of a boy who had never mounted anything bigger than a donkey in his life, and that only on one occasion, when Mike took him to Greenwich Fair. A new feeling was created in his breast: something seemed swelling at his heart, and his eyes filled with tears.

"Well," he exclaimed, "you *are* the trump of an uncle."

The steward smiled.

"And I be such a fool as to think you wor no better than Mike."

"Indeed!"

"Nay, *wuss* of the two."

"Never judge by first impressions, my dear boy," said his relative, meekly; "they generally mislead us. And now that we perfectly understand each other, and everything is settled, you had better return with me to the house."

"I must go home first."

Mr. Silex shook his head disapprovingly.

"But I must," repeated Jack; "I've got another shirt and three collars there."

"Never mind the clothes. I will buy you much better ones at St. Faith's," replied the old man, whose great object was not to lose sight of him an instant, for fear of his communicating with Mike. "Your *wicked uncle* might detain you."

"No fear of that."

Jack's great desire was to see Lillian again. He didn't like the idea of leaving her in the hands of the convict, whose temper was not likely to be improved by his disappearance. This feeling, however, was not sufficiently strong to counterbalance his own interests. The horse, the farm, the new clothes, to say nothing of disobliging his kind relative, whose tone, manner, and words had gradually been growing quite paternal; so he gave up the project, and consented to accompany him back to the mansion of Sir Norman.

As they retraced their steps, the wily tempter, who gave his nephew credit for less shrewdness than he really possessed, continued the same strain of promises, described the country as a perfect Arcadia, talked of allowing him a gun, and assured him—the only bit of truth in all he said—that there were abundance of hares and partridges on the land at St. Faith's.

Several times Jack felt inclined to exclaim "gammon!" but respect restrained him: the dose was not yet sufficiently strong to nauseate him.

At last Mr. Silex, like many other accomplished artists, overacted his part by telling him that he looked upon him as his son, and would make a little gentleman of him. He even went so far as to place his hand affectionately upon his neck.

The lad shuddered at the contact of those long, bony fingers, and a cold chill ran through his veins, as if a snake had suddenly coiled itself around him. Whether a warning or an impulse, we cannot pretend to decide, but he sprang with a bound out of the old man's reach.

"I won't go with you!" he exclaimed; "and I don't believe a word you have said."

"My dear boy."

"Don't 'dear boy' me; you only want to *murder* me; and you would murder me, if I were fool enough to give you the chance."

For several infftants uncle and nephew regarded each other. One with the feeling of a disappointed tiger, which had failed in its spring; the other, with the half-frightened air of the nimble antelope, escaped from its fangs. Both were exceedingly pale.

"That's a very wicked thought," observed the former, struggling to repress his rage.

"It's a true one."

"Heaven forgive you," said his uncle.

"Forgive you for the lies you have told," retorted Jack. "You'll give me a horse to ride about the farm on, will you! and a gun! and new clothes! I don't believe you'd give me anything; unless it wor a sly knock on the head, or a twist of the neck; and as for a makin' of a little gentleman of me—gammon, its a croker you mean."

"Stay."

"Not I," replied the boy; "I have seen quite *emuff* on ye; I'm off."

"I shall have more trouble than I bargained for with that young rascal," thought Mr. Silex. "He knows too much—a great deal too much. Lady Boothroyd and myself are both in his power; and cost what it will, he must be put out of the way of annoying me."

With this reflection he returned to the mansion of Sir Norman.

Whether he really intended to attempt the life of Jack, was a secret confided to his own heart, and to Him who alone could read it.

Jack felt quite merry as he walked briskly through the park; merry as the bird escaped from the fowler's snare. He had received a lesson, and it had not been thrown away upon him.

A second time the words in the prayer Lilly had taught him recurred to his memory, and he exclaimed aloud—

"Deliver us from evil."

This time he had a shrewd idea of what they meant.

CHAPTER XVII.

If crime has its heroes, it has also its pariahs. Immunity stamps the former, failure the latter. The world pays an involuntary tribute of admiration to the man who, having plundered on a gigantic scale, continues to baffle justice. The smartness of the thing tickles its fancy; it is looked upon as a stroke of genius.

Society reserves all its virtuous indignation for the petty larceny rogue—the burglar who had not sufficient wit to escape detection, who has held up his hand at the bar of offended justice, and been condemned, the fitting penalty for want of address. To such it shows no mercy; refuses even labor to the wretch who has once been convicted, yet sternly admonishes him to keep honest, then buttons up its pockets with an air of satisfaction, as if it had done its duty.

By none is this unfortunate class of persons so carefully avoided, as by those who are not a whit more honest than themselves.

This peculiar feeling will account for the state of isolation in which Mike lived; not a neighbor visited him, and yet there were many in the Belvedere-road whose ethics were quite as loose as his, who secretly sympathized with him; but then they had never yet been found out, which lucky accident, we suspect, is the secret of many reputations for honesty.

Mike had but one friend, or pal, as he familiarly called him, in the world, a fellow well known in certain circles about town by the name of Fiddler Dick—a returned convict like himself, and a most cold-hearted and inhuman ruffian. It was the arrival of this man we left the half-drunken ruffian so anxiously expecting, when we broke off to follow Jack Manders in his morning rounds to see what he could pick up.

These two ruffians, who were every way so worthy of each other, had been tried at the same assizes, sentenced to the same term of transportation, served it in the same penal settlement, and returned to England together, wiser, but most certainly not better men. Hence the feeling of—we will not profane the word by calling it friendship, but choose a more fitting term—the intimacy which still existed between them.

Our readers are already aware of the means by which Mike contrived to live. It is unnecessary, therefore, to say more on that point; but as Fiddler Dick had an industry peculiarly his own, we shall proceed to describe it for their information.

He had several beautiful and delicate looking children, whose ages varied from eight to ten; how he obtained them no one knew, or thought it worth while to inquire—certainly they were not his, for flowers could not so belie their stem; but he had terrified or beaten them into calling him father, and that answered his purpose quite as well.

These innocent victims having been taught to dance upon stilts, were paraded about the streets and squares of London. Sometimes their taskmaster made an excursion with them into the country; in either place he made a double harvest, the first from the voluntary contributions of the spectators, a second and far more considerable one from the involuntary ones which his partner, one of the most expert pickpockets of the day, levied whilst their attention was fixed upon the little dancers.

Mike's object in sending for this man was to dispose of Lilly. The five hundred pounds Lady Boothroyd had promised him haunted his dreams; he had made up his mind to have it, without crime if possible, but at all events to have it. The affair required tact as well as management, seeing that he had his brother as well as her ladyship to deal with; but with such a prize in view, he felt himself diplomat sufficient to deceive them both. As for the ultimate fate of the little victim, that was the last of his considerations; or rather, to do him justice, he never considered it at all.

To the carrying out of this rascally scheme there appeared but one difficulty, and that was the extraordinary liking which his nephew Jack had taken to the child. It puzzled as well as annoyed him. He never took a liking to children—in fact, rather hated them; and having mentally turned over the affair in his own mind, came to the conclusion that it would be quite as well if Jack was out of the way, too. The boy was getting obstinate, had braved him several times lately, and showed what his uncle considered an unnatural objection to take a thrashing quietly; added to all this, he expected soon to be in a situation to do without him.

During these cogitations, the returned convict had emptied the ashes from his pipe three several times, by tapping the bowl against the sole of his boot, and was in the act of filling it a fourth time, when a shadow darkened the window, whose diamond-shaped panes were too thickly incrusted with dirt to enable any one on the outside of the house to see through them.

"Go to your room!" he exclaimed, turning to Lillian, and at the same time laying down the pipe upon the table. "See you don't stir or make a noise till I call you down. It will be *wust* for ye if ye do, mind that."

Glad to escape, the child, who felt half-choked by the fumes of the tobacco, obeyed, and the speaker proceeded to unbar the door to admit his friend.

"Well, old un!" exclaimed that worthy, "how *am* ye?"

Mike silently gave him his hand, and pointed to a chair by the table.

"All right," said his visitor, seating himself.

His host filled the two glasses from the gin-bottle, and, raising his own to his lips, gave a nod and drank it off.

Fiddler Dick followed his example; then, without waiting to be asked, filled a pipe. The elder convict did the same; and raking a hot coal from the fire with the broken tongs, politely handed it to his visitor first, which delicate attention was acknowledged by a knowing wink.

For some time they smoked in silence.

"That ain't bad bacca," observed Mike.

"Not by no means."

"And the gin?"

"Well, one can scarcely tell on the first toothful," observed Dick.

The glasses were filled a second time and drained; after which the visitor pronounced it A number one.

As a matter of course, the gentleman did not attribute the special invite, and the very "*'ansome*" preparations to receive him, entirely to Mike's friendship, his personal merits, or both combined. In his own expressive language, he *smelt a dodge* on the board, and determined to keep wide awake to *larn* the ins and outs.

"Any luck lately?" he inquired, in a tone of indifference.

"Not much," answered his host; "that Jack is such a lazy whelp. How is business with you?"

"Bad," replied the ruffian; "*allays* is this time o' the year. It's too cold to be charitable; people doesn't like to unbutton their pockets, for fear the frost should bite their fingers, I suppose, and my expenses is heavy."

"But the partnership account?"

"*Wuss* than t'other," added Dick, and down went the corners of his mouth—an infallible sign that he was lying. "Dexter ain't half the chap he was, though I believe he does his best. You're a lucky cove,—you ain't got no wife and four brats to pervide every day for."

"Come, come!" said Mike, encouragingly, "things ain't so bad; the gals earn their living?"

"Well, nearly," replied his friend, speaking very slowly, "but that ain't the point; they will die off so. Few on 'em last a second winter, the cold and the muslin dresses kills 'em; and yet Bet takes mortal care on 'em. Would you believe it?" he added, "she gives 'em a glass of gin round every mornin' afore I takes them out—a mother couldn't do more."

"Certainly not," exclaimed Mike, emphatically, for he was evidently struck by so much goodness.

"Then we are obliged *to bury them now*," continued the former; "it worn't so in her fust man's time."

"Why, what did he do with 'em?" demanded his host.

"Sell 'em to the doctors," answered Dick, "to natamise 'em, I thinks they call it; "but that was done up afore I took the consarn. They gets the poor who dies in the workus for nothin', and won't buy. Ain't it a shame?" he added, putting the question in the tone of a man who feels that he has been deeply injured, and has a right to the sympathy of his hearers. "Talk of free trade, all humbug! There ain't no free trade—the country is a-goin' to ruin!"

These last observations were delivered very emphatically, and accompanied by a smart rap of the speaker's knuckles on the table, as if to give weight to his words.

"It is rather hard," observed Mike.

"*Rayther* hard!" repeated his guest; "it's cussedly hard. I can't bear to think on it, it makes my blood *bile*—but here's to you!"

The ceremony of refilling and emptying the glasses was gone through again.

"I s'pose," observed the eldest of the two convicts, deliberately puffing the smoke from his lips, "the kids are all healthy now."

"No they ain't," replied his pal. "There's Fan—you recollect Fan, she as used to do the *'ighland* fling?"

Mike nodded, as much as to say that he did recollect her.

"She can't last more than another week," continued the speaker, "her cough is downright awful. I've been obliged to have a bed made up for her in the *washus*. My misses and I couldn't stand it no longer; there was no gettin' a wink of sleep for it."

"Rather a smart gal, I believe."

"Raythur," said Fiddler Dick. "I'd stand a five pound note for such another."

"How old is she?"

"About eight; but we never knows *exactually*."

"Dark hair and eyes, I think?"

"Black as mine," replied the ruffian, shaking his well-greased locks with an air of conceit. "Every one as saw her said she was the very spit of me."

"And you are quite sure she is dying?" said Mike.

"*Sartin*," exclaimed his pal, with a burst of ill-humor.

Suddenly his manner changed. He fancied that he detected a smile upon the features of his companion. A suspicion instantly struck him that he had been trotted out, in other words, pumped, by him for some especial purpose, and he naturally felt indignant at the idea of any one getting the best of him.

"What are you *drivin'* at?" he asked. "I should *ope*, after the years we as known each other, that it is all square atween us."

The guardian of poor Lillian held out his hand to him.

"Well, I *s'pose* it is," muttered the speaker, after taking it. "What is it?" he added: "what is yer game? Come out of yer shell, ye old crocodile, will yer?"

"My game is a very simple one," observed Mike.

"Of course it is."

"I've got a gal to dispose on."

"Indeed!"

"Just Fanny's age."

Fiddler Dick looked him very steadfastly in the face.

"With dark hair and eyes," continued his friend; "and you shall have her cheap."

"And what do you call cheap?" demanded the ruffian.

"Well, five pounds: I call that cheap."

"Is that all?"

"And Fan. I must have her."

"Ye want Fan, does yer!" exclaimed his visitor, a light suddenly breaking in upon him. "I shan't call that a swop. What'll yer give me?"

The old convict looked very much confused. He had not managed the affair quite so well as he had calculated upon doing.

"Mike," said his friend, "you've hurt my feelin's. I didn't expect this on yer! Try to do an old pal out of five counter, in these 'ard times, too! You know my weak side," he added, pointing to the bottle on the table; "and I, like a fool, to unbuzzom myself to you, as if you had been my own brother. I'm hurt at it, Mike—hurt here!"

By way of illustrating the exact spot where the wound had been inflicted, the speaker thumped the left side of his leopard skin waistcoat twice.

It was extraordinary how little effect this pantomimic appeal to their past friendship produced upon his host, who simply reminded him that *bizness* was *bizness*—an aphorism, by-the-by, which few men understood better than the party to whom it was addressed—and the speaker concluded by reminding him that he was not compelled to accept the bargain he had proposed.

Fiddler Dick acknowledged the truth of this remark, nay, even went so far as to admit that he had been "rayther unreasonable," which he accounted for by adding that "when his feelin's wor consarned, he was a trifle too susceptible—an amiable weakness, no doubt—but still it wor one, and he trusted his walued friend and pal would think *nothink* more about it."

His "walued friend and pal" assured him he would not, and after accepting the *amende honorable*, sat some time smoking the calumet of peace in silence

Never, perhaps, were any two persons more equally matched in cunning and rascality—a fact no one knew better than themselves: hence, perhaps, the respect they professed to entertain for each other.

"It's a drawn game," thought Mike.

"I shall draw the old badger from his hole yet," was the mental calculation of his companion.

When two players of equal nerve and skill are engaged in a game of either science or chance, the one who has most at stake is certain to be the first to lose his self-possession. It was so in the present instance: not that the old convict's uneasiness displayed itself in words; far from it; it was his manner of smoking—the short, irregular whiffs—that betrayed him; whilst those of Fiddler Dick were calm and measured, bespeaking a mind at rest. It was really beautiful to observe the regular succession of circles the smoke formed, as he gently puffed it from his lips; how gracefully they rose in the air, enlarging as they rose, and finally dispersed into a thin vapor, which hung like a halo over his head.

Mike could endure it no longer, but was the first to break the silence.

"Well!" he said, shaking his head, "you are downy"—an accusatien which his visitor listened to with all becoming modesty.

"I shouldn't be surprised now," added the old man, "if you didn't try to *persuade* me to make an even swop with the two gals."

The only reply to this insinuation was one of Dick's peculiar winks.

"I dare say ye do, now; but I could not stand that, no—no, I must have somethink in."

"I don't care about swopping," answered his friend, drily.

"Yer don't?"

"No."

"Why, I thought as how you wanted the gal?"

"What do you want with Fan?" demanded Fiddler Dick, turning suddenly round on him. "I'll tell you: as soon as she is dead to pass her off for the other one, and so get fifty or a *hundred* counter at the very least. I ain't agoin' to *lend* myself to any such game."

"Not if ye wor paid?" inquired Mike, insinuatingly.

"*I said lend*," observed the former, slowly: "business is business."

"And how much would yer be expecting now?"

"Half."

"That's not fair, Dick," exclaimed his host; "I only got fifty for the gal myself, and must have all the trouble and keep on 'em both; say twenty, and I'll talk to ye."

"Not a screw less."

"Say no more about it, then, there's no harm done. You are an old pal, and I'd sooner put a good thing in your hand than a stranger, and would a done it if you had only been a little more reasonable. Keep your gal, *and pay the buryin'* on her. I'll keep mine."

So saying the owner of the cottage filled his pipe again. He felt hurt at what he considered an attempt to impose upon his good nature, and mentally vowed, rather than stand another penny, he'd do what he had so frequently vowed never to do again—*run one of his great risks*, as he called them.

"Don't screech afore yer hurt," cried the Fiddler, who during Mike's speech had reflected whether it might not be advisable to get the child—whom somebody was willing to pay fifty pounds to have put out of the way, he believed the sum to be larger—into his hands.

"I ain't a screechin," muttered the old man, doggedly.

"Can't I see the gal?"

"Not afore it's a bargain."

"Well, then, it is a bargain," replied his dear friend, holding out his hand to him, "and you know, when I say the word, its done and done."

Glasses were emptied by way of sealing the arrangement; and poor Lillian, who had all the while been shivering in the cold up stairs, was called down, that her new master might inspect her.

"She is pretty, and no mistake," exclaimed Dick. "What *'air*, just like mine!"

"Isn't it?" said Mike.

"And she stands well on her pins, too!"

"Doesn't she?"

"Come here, my dear."

The child, too much terrified to refuse obedience, advanced to the man, who felt her arms and shoulders, turned her round—in short, examined her as critically as a knowing housewife would a turkey-poult she was bargaining for. The heart of poor Lillian beat wildly as she felt the grasp of his rude hand, and her eyes filled with tears. Oh, how she prayed that Jack would return.

"You won't kill me?" she faltered.

Both the men broke into a loud laugh.

"Indeed, I won't attempt to run away."

"What should I kill you for?" replied the ruffian, releasing her. "I'm werry fond of children, that is, when they behaves themselves. I've got three or four at home. You must come and play with them."

"Girls, sir?"

"Yes, all gals; and Bet 'll be uncommonly fond on ye."

Lilly secretly wondered who Bet was, but did not dare to ask the question.

"Shall I take her now?" whispered Fiddler Dick.

"Not till Fan is here."

"To-morrow night, then?"

"Say the night after," replied Mike. "I must get Jack out of the way first; the boy is so fond of her, he might make a row if he knew on it."

"And the twenty counter?"

"You must wait for that till I am settled with," said the old convict, "which won't be till after Fan is buried—you're fly?"

"All right," answered the man, who could find no objection to so reasonable a proposal; "I told ye afore she can't last more than a week—and I can pretty well tell, I've watched so many on 'em. First it comes through a short cough, up in the throat, then it gets deeper and deeper, and hollower, and hollower, and they grows thin, turns blue under the eyes, and speaks just as Bet does when she has had a drop too much."

"I suppose I shall have no difficulty in managing her," observed Mike, "for I must call the doctor in."

"Bah!" exclaimed Fiddler Dick, "I'll leave you my whip, you'll have no occasion to use it, only just let her see it; *she knows the sight on it*."

The ruffian might have added, and the *feel* of it, but it was unnecessary; his hearer perfectly understood him.

This whispered conversation alarmed poor Lillian exceedingly; several times she looked wistfully towards the door, and prayed that Jack would return.

Everything being settled, her future master took his leave, accompanied by Mike, who insisted on seeing him as far as the corner of the road. He did not forget, however, before leaving the cottage to turn the key of the door upon his victim.

Poor Lillian! the terror of loneliness fell on her, and she felt sick at heart. Giddy with the stifling fumes of gin and tobacco with which the air was laden, had there been a loophole, a crevice, through which she could have escaped, despite the threats of her jailer, in her desperation she would have attempted it; but the wall at the back was too high, and the narrow casement barred. She had but one hope—the return of her young protector; and rushing to the window, she remained there with her pale face glued to the panes, watching, praying for him to make his appearance.

In this position Mike found her; and his brutal temper, which had been previously ruffled by the advantage Fiddler Dick had gained over him, rose at the sight; he had found something he could safely vent it on.

"I thought I told you not to go near there!" he exclaimed, as he dragged her from the window.

"O, forgive me," shrieked the child; "I was only looking for——"

"I'll teach ye to look," interrupted the brute.

Despite her cries, he fastened her delicate wrists, by means of a cord, to the back of the heavy arm-chair in which he had lately been seated; and looked fiercely round the room, till his eyes rested on the remains of a clothes line, which he caught up, and began to knot in a most scientific manner. In his impatience he forgot even to bar the door.

When the instrument of torture was complete, Mike swung it over his head several times, as if to make sure of his aim, and was about to let it fall upon the back of the child, when Jack made his appearance; and, without a moment's hesitation, darting between his uncle and his victim, received the blow himself.

"Stand out of the way, fool!" roared the half-drunken savage.

"What has she done?"

"Stand out of the way, I say!"

"Save me!" shrieked Lillian: "he wants to kill me."

"He shan't lay a hand on you," answered the boy, resolutely. "Come, uncle," he added, "you know I don't often speak out, but when I do I mean it. You must thrash me afore you touch her."

Had Mike been perfectly sober, the probability is, he would not have attempted it. The repeated glasses of gin he had swallowed not only rendered him half-mad, but gave him a strength he did not ordinarily possess. To be sure, it was only a momentary one, but it rendered him a fearful antagonist while it lasted. Twice he knocked the gallant boy to the earth, and when he rushed on him the third time, dizzy and half-stunned with the blows, dashed him into a corner of the room, where he lay stunned for several moments.

"I'll teach you, you young rascal, to dispute with me!" shouted Mike, foaming with rage as he stood over him. "Have you had enough of it?"

"Don't beat Lillian," murmured Jack, "and I'll tell you where uncle Andrew lives."

The ruffian paused. The words half sobered him, for he had not the slightest idea that his nephew had ever heard the name of his brother.

"What uncle Andrew?" he asked.

"Andrew Silex: he as settled about the lady's bringing Lillian."

"And you ain't a lyin' to me?"

"You know I ain't," replied the boy.

"Get up then," he muttered, at the same time throwing the cord on the table.

Jack rose to his feet.

"Now, out with it."

"Not till I have untied Lillian."

"Untie her then."

Jack, who had not yet recovered from the severe blow and fall he had received, staggered rather than walked towards the chair, over the back of which the head of Lillian had fallen. The terrified child had fainted.

"You have killed her!" exclaimed the lad. "How cold she is! Lillian! speak to me! You know me! Dead! dead!" he repeated, clenching his fist, and shaking it at his uncle; "and you shall hang for it, as you ought to have done long since."

"Hang! For what?"

"*I know!*" shouted the boy, whom anger made incautious. "Do you think I never heard what you and Fiddler Dick used to talk about, after you had sent me to bed?"

Mike turned deadly pale. He was now quite sober. Without a word, he untied the wrists of his victim; then went into the back room for a basin of water, with which he sprinkled her face and neck. Gradually the little sufferer revived. Jack took her upon his knee, kissed her, spoke to her in the most soothing words he could think of, and assured her that no one should harm her whilst he stood by.

"But you haven't told me about Andrew yet," observed his uncle.

"Oh, you'll find him at Sir Norman Boothroyd's, in Regent's Park," replied the boy. "He's as bad as yourself; and you may tell him that I said so."

The old convict waited to hear no more, but took up his hat and silently quitted the cottage.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

THE DEPARTED.

BY EMMA ALICE BROWNE.

O'er the low roofs of the loved and the lost
The white moonlight lieth as cold as the frost—
Mournful they sleep in the churchyard alone,
A seal on their lips, on their hushed hearts a stone.

All vainly we seek them, in sunshine or rain;
We call—but they give back no answer again;
We question the lone winds—oh! where have they fled?
They make us no sign of the beautiful dead.

We search mid the summers the prints of their feet,
Their names in the woodlands old echoes repeat;
They have vanished from garden, from meadow, and shore,
And we meet their bright faces at the old hearth no more.

We miss the fond welcome, the pale clasping hands,
That have gone with the angels to the radiant lands;
We miss them in sunshine, we miss them in rain,
But they come with the moonlight, and bless us again.

MARRYING A MECHANIC.

BY MARY C. VAUGHAN.

"Well, Hetty, I hope you have counted the cost, and will not complain of the consequences of what you are about to do!"

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Gardiner, but I really do not understand you," answered Hetty May, to this exclamation, which followed her affirmative reply to the question, "If it really were true that she was about to marry richard Harvord?"

"Not understand me, Hetty! But, of course, that is only one of the affectations girls delight in. Why, with your good sense and knowledge of society, you cannot fail to comprehend my meaning."

"If you mean, Mrs. Gardiner, the sacrifices I must make in leaving my good home, and in conforming to the necessities imposed by a narrow income, I do comprehend you, and having counted the cost, am not afraid to follow the dictates of my own heart."

"I meant that, and much more, Hetty," Mrs. Gardiner answered. "Do you not know that you are about to exclude yourself from the society in which you have always moved, that you are going down several degrees in the social scale, by marrying a mechanic?"

Hetty rose up, her cheek flushed with a generous indignation, her flashing eyes, and the trembling of her small hand, telling how deeply the wound was felt.

"Mrs. Gardiner, I do comprehend you now. And you dare to tell me, Hetty May, that I am about to lower myself, socially, by becoming the wife of Richard Harvord! You who know so well what he has done, and what he is, to speak as if it were a degradation for any lady in the land to become his wife! Had not my ears heard your words, I could not have believed that such sentiments had ever been expressed by you."

"Well, Hetty, I see that my well-meant suggestions are useless. But you will remember them, by-and-by, when it is too late."

Hetty dissented, by a stately bow, and the two ladies parted.

Hetty May had been reared in a comfortable and even luxurious home. Her experiences of life had always been pleasant, though she had known some cares; for her mother was an invalid; and though never suffering so much as to cause her friends any apprehensions of immediate danger, had for several years been too delicate to be troubled with household details. So Hetty had stepped into her place, at sixteen; had attended to the wants of the younger children; looked well to the ways of she household; and had been at once companion, friend, and daughter to her invalid mother.

Chance alone had brought Richard Harvord to her acquaintance. Mrs. May, who had known Mrs. Harvord in the widow's better days, still retained a warm interest in her, and often employed her in such emergencies as will occur in all families—the sudden illness of children, a press of sewing, or the preparation for guests, at which times, though she came as a friend, and was treated as such, she gratefully received the compensation munificently bestowed for her labor.

Richard Harvord often came to fetch his mother home from these visits, and sometimes he would be forced to wait for her. At first, a great, bashful boy, he only attracted Hetty May's ridicule. There was something ludicrous in the ill-fitting garments, from which his big wrists and ankles would protrude so awkwardly. And his sharp features, meager and sallow—for he worked hard, and was ill-fed during his tedious apprenticeship—had an old, shrewd expression, that was wont to excite the little lady's mirth.

Still he spoke to her so deferentially, and was so affectionate to his mother, that she could not help respecting and liking him, especially as she was always hearing his praises, a favorite theme, from that mother's lips.

Years passed on in this way. Richard was out of his apprenticeship, was earning excellent wages, and his mother proudly told of his successes; how he was made foreman of the shop at a very early age, and over the heads of older men; and, at last, with all a mother's triumph, how he had invented an important improvement, and that his employer, having got it patented, and having advanced all the capital necessary to its introduction, was still willing to allow Richard a very liberal share of the profits on its sale.

Richard thus became a sort of hero in Hetty's imagination. She watched him in silence, for they seldom exchanged a word, and saw how greatly he improved as he grew to manhood, and his well-knit figure lost the awkward angularity that had characterized the ungainly, growing boy. He would come in quietly at evening, and if he had to wait for his mother, would sit down in the little sitting-room, below stairs, take a book from his pocket, or from the table, and presently become absorbed in its perusal, only to be aroused by his mother's announcement that she was ready to go home. Seeing his love of books, and hearing from his mother that he could spare but little from his income for this luxury, Hetty would carefully place in his reach, at these visits, such books as she thought would most interest him, and even suggested to her father that he should offer the young man the use of his library.

This kind intervention of Hetty's coming to his knowledge, Richard took occasion to thank her in a few well-chosen words, and the two gradually fell into the first conversation they had ever had, though he had frequented the house for years.

The acquaintance thus commenced was not suffered to die out. Richard had too much self-respect to become intrusive, but he was no stoic to resist the opportunities continually thrown in his way of conversing with an intelligent, high-bred girl, who possessed a considerable share of beauty, and whose kindly interest in his welfare he had long since learned from his mother.

But a long time elapsed—several years in fact—after Richard knew that he loved Hetty May, before he dared to tell her that his sentiments were warmer than the grateful regard her kindness would naturally have inspired. He waited patiently, and yet often with tremulous foreboding, as he saw rivals more favored by fortune and circumstance bowing at her shrine; waited until his sisters, whom he had educated and supported, were well married; waited until his two young brothers were each in situations which yielded them a comfortable maintenance; waited until he had built a pretty cottage, with a room for his mother, still his charge, and thus made a home, tiny but beautiful, to which he might invite his bride.

Then he told Hetty of his love; and without attempting to conceal from her the sacrifices she would have to make in becoming a poor man's bride, he besought her to believe and trust in the love that would never forsake her, but grow truer, and fonder, and brighter, as together they walked up the steeps of life, or hand in hand passed along its downward slopes. And Hetty laid her hand in his, and promised to become his wife, as unfearingly and proudly as if he had been a crowned king.

Her parents repined a little that she had not chosen one whose station more nearly equaled her own; but they, too, had something of the same regard for Richard Harvord which had so long rendered him a hero in her estimation. Her sisters could now amply fill her place in the household, and they felt that they had no right to refuse her the privilege of seeking her own happiness in the way that seemed best to her. They knew well that such a man as Richard Harvord was sure to make his way in the world, to impress his mark on the community, and they uttered none of those sage suggestions which first disturbed Hetty's peace at Mrs. Gardiner's.

Hetty was greatly grieved, as we have seen, at the conduct of her friends, but it did not deter her from doing what she knew to be right. She only changed her plan of inviting them all to make the acquaintance of Richard Harvord on her wedding day. She would not subject herself to the mortification of refusals, nor would she permit the dignity of Richard Harvord's true worth to be outraged by the sneers and supercilliousness of those who, in no respect, perhaps, his equals, yet might feel themselves lifted, by wealth or position, far above him.

So Richard Harvord and Hetty May were married quietly in the parlor of her father's house, Richard's mother and family only being present, save those who lived beneath the roof. Then they had a short bridal tour, Richard's first journey, save the few hurried jaunts undertaken for purposes of business, and rapturously enjoyed, of course with such a companion. Afterward they came back, and Hetty took her place as mistress of the little cottage.

It would be foolish to say that Hetty did not find many lonely hours there, when her husband was away, and no lively friends came to relieve the tedium of her solitude. It was no slight trial to find herself rigorously excluded from nearly all the social enjoyments and the accustomed companionships of her maiden days. But she bore it patiently, found other employments and enjoyments, and the rich compensations of a heart satisfied in its home, and, like Richard, she bided her time.

Such a man as Richard Harvord could not stand still. His course was steadily onward and upward. His never-slumbering intellect, rich in scientific love, as it by this time had become, was constantly elaborating old principles, or discovering new ones. He became a famous inventor, mingled much with men of thought and research, and soon ranked high among them. Riches poured in upon him. His name was in every mouth and nation, and at length the whole civilized world acknowledged him its benefactor.

Ten years from her marriage, Hetty found herself in a position to look down upon every one of the summer friends of her youth. She had married a mechanic, but her husband was now a world-famous man, a man at whose feet the small people who once despised him, bent in lowly admiration. She was in a situation to repay scorn by scorn, but only moved quietly on in the path of life, finding now, as ever, her truest happiness in her husband's unfaltering love.

And how had it fared with Amy Gardiner, her old playmate, and the daughter of the woman who had so depreciated Richard? She, too, had married—married Rudolph Briggs, the heir of great wealth, a youth whose vices, named follies because of their gilding, and whose weakness of intellect, becoming wisdom in the eyes of the worshippers of mammon, were forgotten or overlooked by the worldly-wise mother, anxious only to secure a high position for her daughter.

Ten years of her married life had passed. Her husband had never truly loved her, but had been induced by her mother's flatteries to make her his wife. She had experienced neglect and abuse. His vices grew, as such rank poisonous moral weeds were sure to do in such a soil. He squandered his fortune and her own, and at length, when all was gone, even the property of Mrs. Gardiner hopelessly involved in the attempt to save him, he deserted his home, and, having committed some crime that led him to flee from immediate pursuit, he was supposed to have left the country. At this period Mrs. Gardiner, overwhelmed by shame and mortification, died, and poor Amy, being left utterly alone and destitute, was invited to become an inmate of Richard Harvord's home—not now the pretty cottage, but a mansion in size and luxurious appointments befitting his great wealth and high position. Here her days were passed. And here death came, ere long, and carried away its weak and irresolute victim.

The "mechanic" and his wife are still living. And neither of them, I think, looks back upon any event of their lives with regret. Their marriage has been one of uninterrupted happiness, because founded upon mutual esteem, and an enduring love, and not upon any base calculation of advantage, or worldly gain. And so we leave them, famous, rich in love and in worldly gain, and, richer than all, in the heart's truest contentment.

NO PRIDE IN HIM.

BY GEORGIANNA HERBERT.

"Proud? No indeed! there's no pride in *him*. He's one of the plainest fellows that ever you saw. Don't care any more how he looks than if people were all blind. Oh! *he* is not proud."

We didn't dispute the assertion of our friend Albert; we knew perfectly how deeply he was in error. It would have been no use to contend with him, for he looked merely at the outward appearance of the subject of remark, and at but part of even that.

He had an idea that to be prond a man must walk through the days as stifly erect as a bean-pole, and with a tightly buttoned-up coat and unbendable head go daintily along, scarce condescending to speak or smile for the benefit of common people.

It had never entered into his calculations that a man might go with his uncombed, uncut hair flying like witches in the wind; with his hat stove in at the side, and his coat hanging off of his shoulders; with his neck-cloth untied, and one end of his collar in his hat, the other down his back; that he might be limber-tongued and limber-bodied as an eel; and might roll and dip in walking like a luggar in a gale of wind, and *yet* be *as proud* as that far-famed condensation of pride—Lucifer. Pride is at all times to be detected in the manner. The most free and easy people are frequently possessed of pride as hard and high as the Rocky Mountains. You may not believe in those mountains till you attempt to climb them. *Then* you will.

There is no principle more subtle than pride—nothing so hard to kill. Why, it has as many lives as all the cats on earth put together. An affectionate and benevolent disposition may keep pride very much under subjection and out of sight; but never tell that a man with such a head and face as *that*—no matter where they belong—and with such a hard and willful look in that deep, solemn eye, is not *proud—tremendously* proud—*proud to the core*. He may not carry it outside of him, as one would his armor, but he is nursing it within; and it is the very feeling which renders him so indifferent to his own appearance, or the opinions of men. *His own* is the only opinion he regards.

THE PRESENT MOMENT.—There is no moment like the present. Not only so, but, moreover, there is no moment at all—that is, no instant force and energy, but in the present. The man who will not execute his resolutions when they are fresh upon him, can have no hope from them afterwards; they will be dissipated, lost, and perish in the hurry and scurry of the world, or sunk in the slough of indolence.

A FACT.—In commencing business, young men should make up their minds to the following facts, that their profits will always be a little less than they anticipated, while their expenses will invariably be much more.

A SIGN.

BY ALICE CARY.

Come to me, my good Marcya,
  Have you forgot the day,
You wore your dress of speckled green,
  And were the queen of May?

Do you remember that I said,
  Be blithe to-day, and free;
Sometime, before the May is out,
  Perhaps, you'll stay with me.

Well, change my pillows, Marcya,
  And shade the candle-light
Out of my sleepy eyes; I think
  That time has come, to-night.

Straighten me out, good Marcya,
  Now kiss me in my face;
Open the books, and find the rose
  That used to keep my place.

Now put it on my heart—its leav
  Erewhile so red and brave,
Will freshen in the damp of death
  And light me from the grave.

Do you remember when my love
  Was with me in the glen,
Till after golden moonrise? Well,
  He gave it to me then.

And if I wear my soul away
  Searching to find him, why,
I'll keep his flower, and that will be
  A sign to know me by.

A WONDERFUL ESCAPE.

BY EMERSON BENNETT.

It was just after General Wayne's great victory of the Fallen Timbers, (said an old pioneer,) that I became acquainted with Captain Robert Benham, who had been quite a prominent actor in all the principal battles of the frontier. His name had long been familiar to me in connection with a very peculiar and remarkable affair which had occurred on the Ohio, at the mouth of the Licking river, as far back as the year 1779; and as I had heard his singular adventures at that place related differently by different parties, I felt no little curiosity to arrive at the exact facts; and therefore took an early occasion to get the particulars from his own lips; which I now give, as near as I can recollect, in his own words:

"It was in the autumn of '79," began the captain, "that quite a party of us left the Falls of the Ohio, in keel-boats, under the command of Major Rodgers, for the purpose of making an attack upon the Indians at the old town of Chillicothe. On our way up the river, we met with no remarkable adventure, till we approached the mouth of the Licking, which we did about sunset of a delightful day, when we observed a few Indians standing upon a projecting sand bar, at the point where the two streams unite, apparently watching some companions in a canoe, who were crossing to them from the opposite bank of the smaller stream. If they saw us, there was nothing in their manner to indicate the fact; and thinking it possible to take them by surprise, Major Rodgers ordered the boats to be run up under some bushes along the shore, and all the men save five—some seventy in number—to advance cautiously through the wood, and completely surround the spot where the savages were.

"We all set off in fine spirits, thinking only of the surprise we should give the enemy, and never once dreaming of the surprise they might give us in return. Quietly, stealthily, we pushed onward, spreading out as we advanced, till at length we reached and fairly encircled the fated spot; when, just as the order was being given to rush in upon the foe, we were startled and thrown into the greatest confusion by the uprising on every side of us of several hundred yelling Indians.

"We had been drawn into a complete ambuscade—had been taken by our enemies in the very trap we had set for them. Instantly they poured in a destructive fire, and then fell upon us with knife and tomahawk; when the panic on our part became fearful, and the slaughter tremendous. Like frightened sheep we huddled together; and then, finding ourselves hemmed in by our foes, who hewed us down as fast as they reached us, we turned at bay, and poured back a volley from our side. Then, with yells as wild and savage as their own, we broke through their lines, and rushed for our boats. But the Indians, comprehending our design, reached them before us, and made a capture of all save one, in which the men left in charge had made their escape. Our only chance now was to break their lines again, and start through the forest to the station of Harrodsburgh. Favored by the gathering shades of night, some twenty of our whole party escaped, though hotly pursued by our blood-thirsty foes.

"But I was not one of that fortunate few; for, as I was in the act of clearing some five or six of the enemy, who barred my way to a dense thicket, and just as I had cut down a couple of the nearest, a ball passed through my hips, shattering the bones. At once I fell, but luckily among some thick bushes which for the moment concealed me; and the others, probably thinking me dead or escaped, immediately darted off in pursuit of my flying friends. I had my rifle still in my hands; and wounded and suffering as I was, I proceeded to load it as I lay on the ground—my only hope now being that I should succeed in killing one more of the bloody wretches before a terminus should be put to my own existence.

"As minute after minute went by, however, and the yells of the savages grew more and more distant, and night began fast to envelop me in her welcome pall of darkness, a new hope sprung up in my breast, that I might possibly so secrete myself as to escape the observation of the enemy altogether. Slowly dragging myself through the bushes to a fallen tree, which lay within a few feet of me, I, with the most excruciating pain, crept up under the branches, which I disposed above my person in the best manner I could.

"Here for hours I lay, suffering agonies of body and mind which no language has power to describe. I dared not stir again, scarcely to breathe. I heard the Indians return, and I could tell by the sounds that they were going over the ground and butchering all the wounded they could find. About midnight, as near as I could judge, they once more drew off and lit their camp fires, the glimmering of which I could faintly perceive through the thick foliage which surrounded me.

"Let me pass over that night of horror. If any one would have the faintest idea of what I suffered, he must imagine himself in my situation—there—in the branches of that tree—with both hips shattered—surrounded by my dead friends—and, worse still, my living foes. I dared not change my position, nor give vent to a single groan; and at times it seemed that nature must compel from me some expression of pain, in spite of my utmost will. O, it was a horrible night! and may God deliver me from ever passing such another.

"But the end was not yet. Horrible as that night was, I dreaded to see the morrow. How could I expect to escape the lynx eyes of so many savages, when they should begin to beat over the ground for plunder? And at times the thought of this so worked upon my feelings, that I was more than once tempted to shriek out, and let my position be known, and thus bring upon myself the relief of a speedy death—for I knew, from my disabled condition, that the Indians would not think of taking me prisoner, but butcher me at once. And yet the instincts of life were greater than the temptation I speak of. And these same instincts, by the way, seem wisely set for our preservation—to act when reason tells us that all hope is lost, and we had better end our woes at once.

"How painfully I watched the dawning of the day! how eagerly and tremblingly I listened to every sound! At length I could hear the Indians astir; and soon after they began to traverse the scene of slaughter, and gather up the arms of my companions, and strip their bodies of every garment. They were hours at their work—and to me those hours were ages. At times, when some of them drew near the spot where I lay, I felt my heart in my very throat, and it seemed as if I should die of suffocation. Twice a small party of them came so close that I could see their half-naked, hideously-painted forms through the leaves; and once a single warrior stalked by me, within reach of my rifle. Up and down, and over the ground they passed and re-passed many times, till they were evidently satisfied that none of the dead or the wounded had escaped their notice. They then drew off in a body along the bank of the river, where they remained for hours—in fact, till late in the day—when, being joined by the rest of their companions, who had probably made a long journey in pursuit of the fugitives, they repaired to the boats.

"With a feeling of thankfulness which I cannot express, I heard them put off from the shore, and every sound gradually die away to silence. And yet, shortly after there came an awful revulsion of feeling; for I now felt that I was alone—alone in the wilderness—afar from friends—so crippled that I could not walk—could only move my body, in fact, by a great effort—suffering all the time the most excruciating agonies, and in danger of perishing from starvation. Had I been able to move about, even though never so slowly and feebly, I could have rejoiced in my good fortune; but situated as I was, I felt that an overruling Providence, such as had so far preserved me, could still save me from even a more horrible doom than I had escaped.

"As I thus lay on my back, in a position which had scarcely been changed for more than twenty hours, I looked up through the leaves, and to my surprise, I might almost say joy, beheld a raccoon in the act of descending the trunk of a large tree, some of whose branches even canopied the spot where I lay. Was this poor animal a messenger of hope? Had Providence directed it hither for my preservation? I fancied so then—I almost fancy so still. At all events, I cautiously raised my only remaining friend, my rifle, took a quick but certain aim, and fired. The ball sped to its mark, and the animal dropped dead within a few feet of me; and as I raised myself among the limbs, with the intention of dragging myself to it, I was startled by hearing a human cry.

"Fearing the Indians had not all gone, I hastily reloaded my rifle, and then remained perfectly still, fairly trembling at the thought of what I might next behold, but determined to sell my life dearly, and shoot the first human figure I should see approaching me. Presently I heard the same loud, startling cry repeated, but this time much nearer than before. Still I kept silent, my rifle firmly grasped, for I could recognize nothing like the voice of one of my race. Again I heard the same singular sound, but still nearer yet, and a rustling among the underbrush, apparently at a distance of twenty yards. I now cocked my rifle, and poised it, resolved to shoot the first object that should appear. But fortunately nothing did appear, till my heart had been made to leap for joy, by the utterance of words, in my native tongue, which fell clearly and distinctly upon my ear, and assured me it was a countryman, perhaps a companion.

"'Who are you? where are you? for God's sake, speak!' cried the voice.

"I now gave an answering shout; and soon I was gratified by the sight of a human figure, pushing rapidly through the bushes, whom, notwithstanding his haggard and blood-stained features, I at once recognized as Peter Brent. On getting sight of me, he stopped and exclaimed—

"'My God! Captain Benham—is this you? How did you escape? I thought I was the only being left alive by the butchering wretches!'

"'Alas!' I returned—'I'm as good as dead—for I'm badly wounded in my hips, and cannot walk a step.'

"'See!' he rejoined—'I'm no better off—*both my arms are broken!* and I've no power to use a weapon, and couldn't feed myself if I had anything to eat. I think, of the two, Captain, you're the *best* off, after all—for you at least can shoot game, and so won't starve.'

"'Aye,' said I, 'but how am I to get it when I have shot it?'

"'I see,' he replied, with a sort of laugh, 'the *two* of us only make *one* decent man. You've got arms and I've got legs; and if we ever get out of this infernal scrape at all, I reckon we'll have to work out together. And if heaven is willing, and the red devils will let us alone, we'll be able to do it yet, and cheat the howling imps of two scalps anyhow!'

"It was a very singular and remarkable occurrence, that only two men should have escaped from that scene of slaughter; and of these, the one with his hips broken, and the other with his arms. Brent, like myself, had had nothing to eat for more than twenty-four hours. And like myself, too, he had escaped, after being shot, by crawling into a thicket, and lying flat upon the earth, at a point where the Indians had passed and repassed within a few feet of him. Here he had remained concealed through the night, and the day, till the savages had departed; when the pangs of hunger had brought him forth in search of food; which he had little hope of finding, and knew not by what means he might get it into his mouth if obtained.

"On hearing the report of my rifle, a faint hope had sprung up in his breast that a companion might be near; but whether it should prove to be a friend or an enemy, he determined to make himself known, and risk captivity, or even death, rather than remain in his helpless condition.

"We now began our singular mode of living, which probably has never been paralleled in the world's history. The first thing Brent did, was to search for the raccoon I had shot, and push it along to me with his feet. I then dressed it; and kindling a fire with my sticks, which he also pushed up to me in the same manner, I broiled it, and on this we made our supper—as hearty and as palatable a meal as I ever ate in my life—I feeding him as he sat beside me. Our hunger appeased, we felt more sensibly the pangs of thirst; and at first we could devise no means for obtaining the water so near us. Necessity, however, is the mother of invention; and luckily bethinking me of my hat, I placed the rim in my companion's mouth, and told him to wade into the river, until he should be able to dip the hat under, and then, by returning quickly, I fancied a good portion of the water might be retained, after allowing for the leakage. The plan succeeded; and taking the half-filled hat from his teeth, I held it for him to drink, and then drank myself, the most refreshing and invigorating draught that ever passed my lips.

"The immediate wants of nature being now fully supplied, we began to be more cheerful and hopeful, though still suffering extreme pain from our shattered limbs, which I next proceeded to dress as well as our circumstances would permit. Making some rude splints with my knife, I took off my shirt and tore it into strips, and then putting the bones of Brent's arms together as well as I could, I bound the splints around them. This done, I proceeded to dress my own wounds in the same incomplete way.

"Another night now set in, which we passed together, lying close in the thicket, and suffering a great deal of pain. We slept little, but spent the tedious hours in talking over the dire events which had happened, and mourning the loss of our brave companions.

"The second day, beginning early in the morning, and keeping a sharp lookout for game, I was fortunate enough to shoot two squirrels and a wild turkey, the latter being quite numerous in that region. This served us for food through the day, and on the third I succeeded in shooting a couple more squirrels and a few birds, my companion always kicking the game to me with his feet, and pushing up sticks and brush in the same manner, and I dressing and cooking the animals, and feeding him.

"So matters went on for several days, the game gradually becoming scarcer, and requiring a great deal more labor on Brent's part to drive within reach of my rifle. Days thus passed on, and even weeks, before my wounds were so far healed as to permit me to hobble about on crutches, and during all this time we saw not a human soul, though anxiously watching for some chance boat to pass down the river and take us off.

"Our garments being thin, and our shirts torn up for bandages, and the weather setting in cold, our future prospects looked cheerless indeed, and we were much concerned lest we should be obliged to winter where we were. To be prepared for any emergency, we, with much labor, put up a kind of rude shanty, which served in some measure to protect us from the almost wintry blasts which now began to sweep over the desolate scene.

"As the season grew colder and more inclement, the game became so scarce that my companion with difficulty drove enough within rifle shot to give us a single meal a day; and, with all the rest, our powder was so low in the horn that I could count the charges, and dared not fire except when certain of my mark; then it was we began to feel the horrors of despair, and sometimes to regret that we had outlived the dead around us. Almost naked, with unshaven, haggard faces, hollow cheeks and sunken eyes, we now indeed looked pitiable, even to each other; every day, too, our condition seemed to grow worse, instead of better; and at last, with a sinking heart, I informed Brent we had but four charges of powder in our horn.

"'God help us!' was his reply.

"Matters were thus at their very worst, when, one day, Peter burst suddenly into our shanty, where I sat shivering over a few embers, and, with tears in his eyes, exclaimed:

"'Blessed be God! Captain Benham, we're saved!—there's a flat-boat just turning the bend above us!'

"Who shall describe my feelings then! I started up and hobbled down to the bank of the river, shouting wildly as I went, lest the boat, scarcely yet within sight, should pass us ere I could reach the beach.

"Oh! how painfully anxious we watched its slow approach, continually shouting, to attract the attention of men too far distant to hear us, and making every kind of signal we could possibly think of for the same purpose.

"Gradually the boat neared us, and at length we could see its crew gathered together, and pointing towards us. But, oh Heaven! imagine, if you can, our horror, when we saw them suddenly betake to their oars, push over to the Ohio shore, and then row past us with all their might, amid our frantic gesticulations and piteous prayers for help! On they swept down the river, and then Brent and I, looking at each other with silent horror, sunk down together upon the cold beach, and mentally prayed for death to end our sufferings.

"Suddenly—oh, sight of agonizing joy!—we saw a canoe put off from the larger boat and approach us, and then we got up, and fairly screamed and begged for assistance. When the rowers had come near enough to converse with us, they stopped, and told us they feared we were decoys, put there to draw them to the shore, that the Indians might fall upon and murder them, and it took no little time, and the most earnest asseverations and piteous appeals, to convince them to the contrary.

"At last, after rowing past us two or three times, and closely inspecting the shore, and getting us to come far out on a sandbar, they ventured to take us aboard. We were kindly treated by these men, when they came to hear our story; and being taken by them to the garrison at the Falls (now Louisville, Ky.) we were placed under the care of a skillful surgeon, and soon restored to our usual health and strength."

Such was the remarkable story of Captain Benham—remarkable for the fact that two men should so singularly escape from the savages, and live six weeks in the wilderness—the one with useless arms, and the other with useless legs—the two together making, as it were, *only one whole man!*

Whoever shall to-day stand upon the levee of the now large and flourishing city of Cincinnati, and glance his eye across the beautiful Ohio, shall behold the very spot where these remarkable events occurred, at a time when all around, on either shore, was a wild, howling wilderness.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

☞ *All the back numbers of the* Ledger, *from June 7th, 1856, up to the present date, can be had at our office, in quantities or by the single copy.*

The Problem of the
  Brothers-or-sisters-I-have-none-
  But-this-man's-father-is-my-father's-son
man, published in number 44 of the present volume of the Ledger, has brought out pecks of responses; among others, one from a "foreign correspondent," who gives the origin of the puzzle in a neat story. He says that many years ago, an Austrian captain of undoubted bravery and unquestionable stupidity, while dining at the "White Swan" in Frankfort-on-the-Maine, was amused by the head-waiter by the following problem:—"There is somebody in the world," says the waiter, "who is neither brother nor sister of mine and yet is my father's child. Who is it?" The captain declared himself astonished; he could not solve the question. "It is myself," said the waiter. Thereupon the captain declared himself to be still more astonished, and carefully noted the problem in his memory, wherewith to astonish some one else on some suitable occasion. On returning to Vienna, the brave captain attended a distinguished party, where he was mercilessly assailed by a company of witty ladies. "Now is the time for my astonishing joke, or problem," thought the captain, and begging the attention of his tormentors he said, "My dear ladies, can you tell me who that person is who is neither a brother nor sister of mine and yet is *my father's* child?" "Why, it is yourself, Captain," said the ladies, at once. "Mistaken!" exclaimed the obtuse captain, with shouts of delight at having mystified the ladies; "*it is the head-waiter of the 'White Swan' at Frankfort; he told me so himself!*" This announcement was of course received with shouts of laughter; and the captain was encouraged to repeat the problem and its solution (whereby he made the head-waiter the child of his own father) on every possible occasion, which he continued to do as long as he lived, to the infinite amusement of his auditors, without even so much as suspecting what a ludicrous mistake he was making.

Rolla, of Reading, Pennsylvania, is a poor young man and a mechanic; a good workman, and gives satisfaction to his employer; he is eager to acquire knowledge and win distinction—to rise above his present condition and make a position among the great ones of the land. But he says there is no public library in Reading, and he knows no one who has a private library to which he can gain access; he is not able to buy many books, and don't know what works he should buy and study first. Rolla's ambition is a highly laudable one, and is doubtless shared by hundreds of young men situated in a like adverse manner with himself. Let such not despair. "Where there is a *will* there is always a *way.*" Any young man who is ambitious to obtain knowledge, to better his condition by honest means, and to elevate himself in the social scale, can always do so in this country, no matter where he lives. He can at least get a Bible; copies of that Book of books abound in every part of the land, and are sold at such remarkably low rates as to place the possession of one within the means of everybody. And no better book than the Bible can be found for the basis of a library, nor one the reading of which will more profit the reader. The young man who reads it diligently, and with a proper spirit, will be sure to rise in the world. It will expand his mind, quicken his intelligence, ennoble his nature, and attune his soul to divine harmonies. He will make friends, win public respect, and gain needed assistance and sympathy from unexpected sources. A young man can also get assistance in such matters—advice, the loan of books, &c., from any clergyman, teacher, or man of letters to whom he will apply, stating his wishes frankly. Therefore, Rolla, be not discouraged. Act upon the hints we have thrown out, and you will be certain of your reward.

Adventurer.—We cannot imagine why you think you "could make a good thing of going to Acapulco and establishing a trading house there." The place, though of considerable importance in the days of the buccaniers and the richly-freighted Spanish galleons, is now a seedy, pestilential hole in which you would not probably live six months. Many years ago an artificial cut was made through the chain of high rocks by which the town is surrounded, for the purpose of giving a freer circulation of air, in hopes that the pestilential character of the place might be mitigated, but though this has been of considerable service, Acapulco still continues to be very unhealthy. It is situated on the Pacific ocean, 190 miles south-southwest of the city of Mexico.

E. H. Clark wishes to know if a marriage ceremony performed by a clergyman by telegraph, the bride living and being in one city at the time of the ceremony, and the bridegroom in another, would be legal. No, not any more than it would be if the intercommunications, the questions and responses, were made by letter. If one party could be permitted to be absent from the clergyman's presence, both could be, and the bride might be in Buffalo, the bridegroom in New York, and the clergyman (who marries them) in Albany.

Joshua.—The "Namburies" are a class of Brahmins, resident in the town of Adanad in Hindostan, who refuse to eat or drink with other Brahmins. The elder sons of the Namburies marry as many wives as they can support and live with them, but the younger sons seldom marry, in order to prevent the decline of the dignity of their order by their becoming too numerous.

Jerome.—You did right in defending the reputation of the party assailed. When a man attacks the character of the absent, he has no just cause of complaint if a friend of the person traduced "carries the war into Africa."

Graduate.—We do not approve of jokes upon sacred subjects, nor of applying quotations from the Bible in a spirit of censoriousness or levity.

H. S. F.—The object of Sir John Franklin in sailing to the Arctic regions was to discover a "northwest passage."

Sorrowful.—This correspondent writes as follows: "My husband is a cross, ugly, selfish, irritable, stubborn fellow, and cares for nothing nor anybody but himself. He is all business and no pleasure; won't ride or walk out with me, nor accompany me to any place. Now, must I be denied all the privileges of my sex, and all the pleasures of life, because he does not believe in the doctrine? I have a gentleman friend who is entirely the reverse of my husband in character. He is kind, pleasant, agreeable, sociable, and always good-natured. I know, because I see him every day. Now, if my friend invites me to take a walk or ride with him, or to attend a party, or go to the theatre or other places of amusement, would there be any impropriety in my doing so, considering all the circumstances? Please inform me soon, for whatever be your advice I shall receive it kindly, as I love the Ledger." Well, madam, we will advise you; but first, let us say that your letter has excited painful emotions in our bosom. We regret that any woman is capable of writing, even anonymously, about her husband, as you have written about yours. It must be that your letter was written hastily, under the immediate sting of some real or fancied wrong, and does violence to your true nature. It is a great trial and a grievous hardship for an impulsive, genial, and enthusiastic woman, with a nature that thirsts after social enjoyment, to have a cold, unsympathetic man for a husband, who ignores and even tramples upon all the beneficent joys of home, and simply uses his house as though it were an inn; but even such a wife of such a husband should have sufficient self-respect to keep her from writing such a letter as yours. As for that "gentleman friend," we advise you to be cautious how you let your sympathies go out towards him. You are treading on dangerous ground. It would be highly improper for you to accept any of his invitations.

Madame E. L.—The "Loving Cup" is a feature of the grand dinner given at the Mansion House, by the Lord Mayor of London, in honor of his (to be) successor in office, the Lord Mayor Elect. It consists of a large flagon (with a moveable lid) of the best spiced wine, which is prepared by the head waiter on the feast, who, with an appropriate call to silence and a stereotyped address, hands it to the Lady Mayoress; the Lady Mayoress then turns round and extends the flagon to her right-hand neighbor, the Lord Mayor Elect, who lifts the lid, whereupon she drinks, wipes with a towel that part of the flagon touched by her lips, and hands it to the Lord Mayor Elect. He puts on the lid, and turning to his right-hand neighbor, presents the flagon; the right-hand neighbor takes off the lid, and the Lord Mayor Elect drinks, and wipes the flagon, which is again covered and passed to the right-hand neighbor; and so the operation is repeated until the flagon traverses the entire circle of the company.

Showman.—The scheme you propose does not strike us as a very promising one, either in point of pecuniary emolument or personal respectability. You would be obliged to lead a sort of semi-vagabond life, and your income (if you received any income at all) would be exceedingly precarious. You had much better stick to your "hard work." That is at least honest and respectable, and yields you a support. You should exercise the strictest prudence and economy, and put by a small sum every week; you should also read good books, and study as much as possible; and then, when you shall have accumulated a little capital, and stored your mind with useful information, and acquired good habits, it will be an easy matter for you to rise to a controlling position among your fellows, that will yield both greater rewards and higher honors.

Cricketer.—The game of cricket is not so old, by some centuries, as you suppose. James I., of England, had a book published containing a list and description of all the games and sports then known in his kingdom, and cricket is not so much as referred to or named therein. Nor is it mentioned by Shakspeare, whose works abound in allusions to all the then known games, the meanest as well as the noblest; and Massinger, Shirley, Marlowe, and other dramatists of that age are also silent in regard to it. Steele and Pope are the first, or among the first, authors that refer to cricket. Your statements about Shakspeare, Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Walter Raleigh, etc., being "skillful cricketers, and *passionately fond of the game,*" must therefore be classed among the apochrypha of the history of your "noble pastime."

Emma says, in regard to the puzzle enunciated by the man who, on pointing to a portrait, said—
  "Brothers and sisters I have none,
  But that man's father is my father's son"—
that "it is plain to be seen that the person represented by the portrait was the speaker's father's grandson, and therefore that he must have been the speaker's nephew." This cannot be, Miss Emma. The speaker expressly declares that brothers or sisters he has none; and how can a man without brothers or sisters have a nephew? The truth is, the portrait represented the *speaker's own son.* Emma will of course have no difficulty in perceiving that the speaker could very well be the father of his own son, and the son of his own father.

Good Family.—We cannot assist you in your heraldic researches. We care nothing about such matters. We believe in a man's looking to *himself*—his own energy, honesty, diligence, and character, for his honors. He who depends for honor and position upon the character and greatness of his ancestors, is like a potato: all the best part of him is under ground. The only description of a coat-of-arms we remember is that of one suggested as applicable to the case of a great scamp, and which ran as follows:

"Two posts *standant;*
One beam *crossant;*
One rope *pendant;*
And a rogue on the *end on't!*"

B. C. G.—Not by a century or so. The writer to whom you refer was named Blaise Pascal, and was not born until about seven years after the death of Shakspeare. He was a very superior human being in every respect. Before he was ten years old he used to steal away to some solitary place, to pour over Euclid as other boys of his age would over the "Arabian Nights." At the age of fifteen he published his treatise on "Conic Sections." He was born in the parish of Clermont, in the province of Auvergne, in France. He was deeply pious, rigidly moral, and exhibited an amiability of temper as nearly angelic as mortals can attain unto.

Roderic.—It is impossible to say "what it would cost a man, his wife, and three children to live comfortably in New York," inasmuch as no two families are alike in regard to expenditures, nor do any two agree as to what is comfortable. Some families of that size live contentedly, and in a comfortable manner, for less than $800 a year, while others annually expend as many thousands and fail to secure comfort—according to their idea of it.

Polyanthus.—It will do you no harm to study botany, but as it is almost invariably taught in the schools, it is utterly useless so far as the making it of any practical benefit is concerned. Few things are sillier than the prattling over flowers indulged in by many superficial teachers and students (so-called) of botany. As an amusement, the usual school-course of botanical study may be said to be harmless.

Clara.—We must respectfully decline your offer. You are certainly entitled to a complimentary belief in your own talents, and you have expressed such belief quite inoffensively. We are astonished that people will continue to write to us, proffering contributions, when we have so repeatedly stated that we do not and will not accept them from any body except our regular contributors.

Julius offers the following arithmetical problem for the solution of the school-boys who read the Ledger.

If to my age there added be,
One-half, one third, and three times three,
Six score and ten the sum will be.
What is my age? Pray tell it me.

Cerito.—No. The fact of your husband's having absented himself for five years, and the report that he has married another woman, do not give you a right to marry again. You must first get your marriage with him annulled, or, in other words, you must get a divorce, before you can lawfully wed a second husband.

Bank wants to know "which is the best and most secure Savings Bank in New York or Brooklyn." We must decline giving our opinion on such personal matters. We have no desire to "puff" any Savings Bank by stating that it is the best and safest institution of the kind in New York or Brooklyn.

Texas.—Yes. The Ledger is sent by mail to any part of Texas. You of course know best whether the mails are regular in your vicinity. We mail our paper with the utmost care, punctuality and regularity, and if a subscriber does not get his paper regularly, it is not our fault.

J. B. Conway, C. W.—The advertisement is genuine, no doubt; the work advertised we know nothing about. We only know that but little confidence is to be placed in the skill or integrity of parties engaged in such business.

C. Cady.—In large cities, such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, etc., the postmaster gets a salary and in other cases he gets a per centage on the receipts of his office.

Justinian.—A knowledge of the Latin language would probably be of *some* use to you, whatever your station in life; but it is always injudicious to bestow much time upon what we do not intend to make *eminently useful* to us.

Elizabeth.—There would be no impropriety in "renewing the acquaintance." It would probably be the best thing for all parties that you could do.

Yacht.—Articles of jewelry are very appropriate gifts from a gentleman to a lady, in case the former is able to bear the expense.

Inquirer.—A minor cannot legally buy and sell real estate in his own name in this State.

Consumptive.—It strikes us that you need a thorough bath daily.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*